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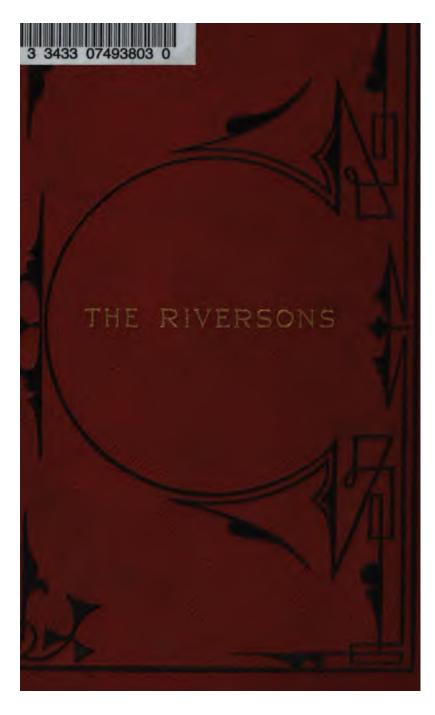
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To those weary housekeepers in every land, who are forced by circumstances and fashion, to try and make each dollar do the work of three; and with the earnest wash that their domestic difficulties may be as happily overcome as were those of the Riverson's, this volume is respectfully dedicated, by their friend,

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## The Riversons

### A NOVEL

BY

S. J. BUMSTEAD

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### THE RIVERSONS.

### CHAPTER I.

AUNT BETSEY VISITS HER RELATIVES.



NE after another of the gentlemen who were traveling to Philadelphia by Crawford's Line, that morning in July in the year of our Lord

1845, had declared that it was a very hot day. One had even ventured to remark that it was *devilish* hot, and had escaped without serious contradiction.

Crawford had been running a line of stages between Norristown and Philadelphia for many years, and the recent completion of the railroad between these cities had not as yet driven him out of business. The stage in which our travelers were journeying that morning was one of the olden time. The wheels were heavy and durable, the axles were of wood and nicely calculated to hold up the weight of all who could be crowded within and on the top of the vehicle.

The driver, a jolly Jehu, who had driven for this line many years, declared with a twinkle in his eyes, as

'he replied to an inquiry of one of the passengers at his side, that the strength of her axles—a stage always belongs to the feminine gender—had been so arranged that one more passenger than she ought to carry, would break her down.

Upon being reminded by this skeptical countryman that one or two unusually large persons would make such a difference as to bring about that sad result, he stoutly maintained his ability "to size 'em up and average 'em about right." The body of the stage was swung upon very heavy leather straps, which permitted considerable motion not at all unpleasant to the passengers.

Upon the outside of the body could be read quite easily the words, "Crawford's Line, Norristown and Philadelphia." Although all the windows were open to their greatest extent, the three gentlemen upon the inside seemed to question the wisdom of their choice of seats, and were debating the advisability of enjoying the feeble breeze from the top of the stage. After a thorough discussion, the question was decided adversely, and the handkerchiefs and fans continued to transact the same brisk business they had done for the previous hour. The horses felt the influence of the intense heat, which did not prompt them to exhibit any of that exuberant life, which the sun imparted to every blade of grass or plant in the vegetable world about them.

Of the three gentlemen passengers inside the stage, one would have been selected by those familiar with the people and the customs of the day, as a most im-

portant personage. The gentleman alluded to was probably fifty years of age. He seemed to be in the possession of vigorous health, and was dressed with scrupulous neatness, wearing a bright blue cloth coat with brass buttons, and buff nankeen waistcoat and trousers. His face was smooth, his forehead quite high, and he had light hair, while his blue eyes bore an exceedingly benevolent expression.

An observer would easily have formed the opinion that he was of Quaker ancestry, for he occasionally used the "Thee" and "Thou." He could freel converse with the driver, for all the windows were open, and from time to time he would ask that functionary a question about a house they happened to be passing, or the name of a lane just ahead of them. The driver of a stage-coach in these days was not a man who could be overlooked with impunity; and on that day no one seemed more impressed with this fact than the passenger of Quaker ancestry.

Speculation as to this gentleman's important business was idle in the absence of any conversation which might bring that fact to light. While he was evidently disposed to be friendly, no one was likely to become too inquisitive with him. As they rolled along the hard pike, with Barren Hill looming up just ahead, the horses seemed to know instinctively that rest and water were close at hand. Our courteous passenger turned to the driver, and as he wiped the perspiration from his brow once more, asked: "Driver, shall we stop long on the hill just before us?"

"No, sir," returned the other; "we only water the horses and give them a chance to get their wind, taking up any passengers as may be waiting to ride to the city with us. Then we shall move on, stopping for dinner and to change horses at Crawford's, a mile or two further on."

"That is where the owner of the line lives, and keeps his stages and horses, is it not?" asked the gentleman, returning once more to the charge.

"Yes sir, it is; and Crawford keeps a mighty good tavem. There you can get a good square meal, and a little something to drink for thirsty man or beast." Here the stage drew up in front of the tavern on Barren Hill.

"Good-day, Bill," said the driver to the waiting hostler, who came forward to attend to the horses, "better wash out their mouths and cool 'em down a bit first, for this is a scorcher," he added by way of caution.

"Good-day to yourself, Mr. Trotter," said the hostler good-naturedly; "but you musn't forget that I know a thing or two about Crawford's horses, and not forgetting you either, Mr. Trotter."

Mr. Trotter smiled affably, then swung kimself lightly out of his seat, and walked into the tavern barroom. "Any passengers for us to-day, sir?" he inquired of the landlord, as he took a lemonade with a little addition from a peculiarly shaped bottle handed him by the bartender. "Business ain't very brisk," answered the landlord, "though we have one passenger booked for you to-day, and that is no less a person

than Aunt Betsey Claybank. You know her, I reckon, Mr. Trotter?"

"Well now, that's a question 'as I hardly know whether to get mad at or not," returned Mr. Trotter. "To think of a man drivin' stage up and down this pike for twenty years right past Aunt Betsey's door and not know her, seems redickerlous enough without getting mad, and so long as it is so blasted hot, I guess I won't," concluded Mr. Trotter. "But what takes her down to Riverson's just now? for I suppose that's where she wants to go, as she never goes any other place," resumed Mr. Trotter.

"Oh, I suppose there's s mething the matter at Riverson's. They always want to see Aunt Betsey then," said the landlord.

"Well, you know she usually goes there to spend the hottest weather," said Mr. Trotter with considerable interest.

"Yes, Aunt Betsey was here bright and early to engage her seat, and told us to be sure not to forget her," resumed the landlord.

"Well, you can bet we won't pass her house without halting when she wants to travel by Crawford's line," said Mr. Trotter impressively, as he bid the landlord good-day. Then, stalking towards the door, he shouted: "Jump in, gentlemen, jump in!" and, mounting the box, he gave a condescending smile of approbation to Bill, which that gentleman evidently considered sufficiently remunerative for any services he may have rendered Mr. Tretter, and

the next moment the stage went thundering down the pike.

They were not long in reaching the old-fashioned story-and-a-half house by the side of the pike, which Mr. Trotter knew very well as the home of Betsey Claybank. When the stage was exactly in front of the house, with a loud "whoa," and a vigorous application of the brakes to the wheels, Mr. Trotter suddenly brought the stage to a standstill.

The ratile and noise was intended to bring Aunt Betsey to the door, and it produced the desired effect. There stood the vigorous yet kind-hearted little maiden lady, who was such a terror to the shiftless, ne'er-dowell cowards that are to be found in every community. Several of the passengers, having heard the conversation between the driver and the landlord at Barren Hill, had become interested in Aunt Betsey, and among them was the Quaker.

"Good morning, Mr. Trotter," she said. "I won't keep you a moment; it's too hot for that, and besides I'm always on time, if you ain't. Here's my trunk, and . . . come Jerry?" whereupon a large tiger-cat sprang upon her shoulder — the only male Aunt Betsey had much use for, as she had often asserted, with a hearty laugh. Mr. Trotter at once assisted her into the coach, where she seated herself directly in front of the gentleman with the blue coat.

"Now, Aunt Betsey" said Mr. Trotter, "if you need anything, just let me know, I am afraid I can't make you altogether comfortable to-day."

took in her answer. But just then the stage rolled up in front of Crawford's tavern.

Here Mr. Trotter was at home. Though, for that matter, at what tavern along his route did he not feel as much at home as if "to the manor born?" As the stage stopped, and Mr. Trotter jumped nimbly down, Mr. Crawford came forward, and addressing the passengers, informed them that the stage would tarry long enough for them to obtain their dinner. He spied Aunt Betsey, of course, and must needs shake hands with her.

"Come into the house and take dinner with us, Miss Claybank," said the genial Crawford.

"I am so much obliged, Mr. Crawford, but then you know I have just had my dinner, though I believe I will sit on the piazza while the others are eating." And saying this, Aunt Betsey, assisted by Mr. Crawford, alighted from the stage, and was given a cool seat upon the long piazza, so prominent a feature of every public house in Pennsylvania.

In a short time they were all seated in the stage once more, and with fresh horses proceeded more rapidly on their way down the pike toward Philadelphia. To the right and left fields of ripened grain stretched over the hills. No hum, such as the busy harvesting machines of the present day make, greeted the ears of the travelers! Nothing but the silent rows of men, with backs bent to the task of swinging with measured stroke the old-fashioned cradle.

It was a rural picture now rarely seen in this busy

land of ours; but, curious to relate, it elicited very little notice either from Aunt Betsey or any of the other passengers in the stage that day. For them it was too old to be interesting. To the traveler of to-day it would have a flavor of the Orient, that would interest and entertain accordingly.

Aunt Betsey first broke the silence, and it referred to the men who were breaking rocks by the side of the pike at various points.

"We ought to be proud of our great turnpike," said she, looking about her, "and for my part I prefer the stage to the new-fangled steam cars. It seems like flying in the face of Providence," she added, apprehensively.

"Then I suppose you travel this way by preference," remarked the Quaker gentleman. "For my part, ma'am, I am obliged to make this journey by stage, or I should have traveled by the cars."

"Of course, Mr.— ah—" and here the gentleman, noticing her embarrassment, handed Aunt Betsey a card upon which she read, "Thomas Lorgan," and down in the left hand corner, "Trexal, Lorgan & Co., Philadelphia," while her companion asked her pardon for not having before acquainted her with his name. "I intended to say, Mr. Lorgan," continued Aunt Betsey, "that I could not travel any other way, journeying, as I am, to my relatives, who live down on the Wissahickon, some distance from the pike."

"And pray, how do you reach their house if that is the case?" asked Mr. Lorgan. "Oh, that is easy enough. Crawford believes in accommodating his passengers, and will go a bit out of the way when he can. And here we are passing Hagy's church. There it stands at the end of that avenue of trees. Times are changing rapidly, indeed. It hardly looks like the same place."

With this, Jerry now began to attract the attention of his mistress, his conduct seeming to say that he had been neglected.

"Maybe you are hungry, Jerry?" said Aunt Betsey, as she took a bit of cold meat out of a package in her reticule. Jerry now climbed upon Aunt Betsey's shoulder, and nimbly picked the meat from his mistress' hands.

"You can have a nice pan of milk this evening, Jerry," she continued.

Mr. Lorgan now gazed abstractedly out of the window for a few moments, then he turned toward Aunt Betsey and asked: "How do you like living along the Wissahickon, Miss Claybank?"

"Very much indeed, sir," she replied. "It is a beautiful region, and this is increased by my great interest in the Riverson family. Perhaps you knew the old Colonel, Mr. Lorgan? He was well known in this part of the country, I assure you."

"I am sorry to say I do not enjoy that honor, Miss Claybank. Is he a very old man?"

"Bless your soul, he is dead, Mr. Lorgan. Though he only died a year ago, and lived to be ninety. There are several curious circumstances connected with his death. But perhaps you don't care to hear about a peculiar old man, or the troubles of his family?" for Mr. Lorgan was again gazing out of the window, with a preoccupied air.

"Indeed, ma'am, I should be glad to know more of the Riverson family. I beg that you will proceed with your story, I will be all attention," said Mr. Lorgan, with the utmost politeness, which quite won Aunt Betsey's favor.

"It seems like trouble, Mr. Lorgan, when an old man dies suddenly, and leaves a married son with two children, together with an unmarried daughter, even if he has lived in the world ninety years. But when the day after the funeral the son is taken with apoplexy, and dies before he can say a word to his wife, sister or children; and when it was supposed that the son knew all about his father's business; and when that father had been very peculiar and headstrong in his ways for years previous to his death, then I say it is trouble sure enough. But if that isn't enough, Mr. Lorgan, just add to it the curious fact, that although every one who knew Colonel Riverson, believed him to be a wealthy man, his family has been unable to find any property since the death of the father and son, but the old red mill and the house where they lived, together with forty acres of timberland along the creek."

Mr. Lorgan was interested now, and Aunt Betsey was thoroughly convinced of the fact.

"That is certainly a very curious circumstance,

Miss Claybank. Have they searched his chest and all places where he would have been likely to keep valuable papers?" asked Mr. Lorgan.

"Yes, indeed, sir. They searched for six months, Mr. Lorgan, but it wasn't any use. Something is wrong; of that I am positive. You see, he served through the revolution, and owned large tracts of land all over the country; but after 1837 he gradually sold all his land, and would not listen to John or Prudence. For Colonel Riverson was always master of his own household, Mr. Lorgan."

"Your story astonishes me, Miss Claybank," said Mr. Lorgan.

"I think it is enough to astonish any one, Mr. Lorgan; and I have always said you couldn't tell what a strong-minded, queer old man would do. But of all old men I ever knew, his actions were the queerest. You see, he thought the country would all go to the dogs after the bank failed. He said he had no confidence in the government he had helped to establish. That the young fellows who had had the country's welfare in charge, were a set of fools bent upon ruining it, and that Andrew Jackson was the chief one, he was firmly convinced. And when John or Prudence tried to prevent him from selling a farm, he became angry, and would order them to attend to their own business."

Here the stage halted at the Leverington tavern, and after a short delay resumed the journey; with the starting up of the coach, Aunt Betsey began the second chapter of her quaint discourse, but it only served to recall Mr. Lorgan from a deep reverie, an incident attended by the words, which Aunt Betsey afterwards quoted to the Riversons themselves:—"Can it be possible? Can it be the same?" Mr. Lorgan then begged her to proceed.

"I was going to say," she resumed, "that the family have never recovered from the shock of finding themselves poor, when they had always thought they would be rich after the grandfather's death, and I am willing to admit to you, that it is no great wonder, although I talk very different to them, I pity each one of them; but after all, when you have done your best, there is no use sitting down and folding your hands, as Prudence does, and I make no bones about telling her so. I believe you will agree with me, Mr. Lorgan. Empty repinings against the decrees of Providence are scarcely scriptural. Prudence says, she don't care, whether they are or not, and while I don't agree with Prudence about this, they are pleased when I can visit It's a nice cool place for me during the hot months, and besides I can help the children some with my little means; and though it isn't much, no one else could even do that. Prudence wouldn't let them; she is so monstrous proud. But what is all this to a stranger? I am really ashamed of myself for talking to you in this way, though I am sure you will never abuse my confidence," concluded Aunt Betsey.

"Of that you may be assured, Miss Claybank." I can keep secrets effectually, as more than one of my friends can testify. My curiosity has been aroused by

your story, and I shall drive out that way before long, when I hope I may have the pleasure of meeting you again, and of hearing that your friends are doing well," said Mr. Lorgan.

Here the stage turned from the pike into Shurr's Lane, which leads down the hills to the old Red Bridge that then crossed the Wissahickon at this point. As they turned into the lane, Mr. Lorgan noticed an old fashioned story-and-a-half stone house that stood on the corner, and several children playing in the yard; one active young fellow ran out to the fence and shouted: "Hello, Aunt Betsey, how do you do? I am glad to see you; the're looking for you."

"That's Sydney Ransom," said Aunt Betsey to Mr. Lorgan. "He has worked in the mill for a number of years, and seems like one of the family at Riverson's."

In a few moments they emerged from the bridge upon the other side of the creek, drove past the old red grist mill, and drew up by the side of the old homestead of the Riverson family. Here stood Marian and Ned Riverson with their mother and Aunt Prudence, all eager to welcome Aunt Betsey to Riverson's. Ned, without waiting to give the visitor a specifically personal greeting, seized Jerry, and ran away with him, intimating in his boyishness that they would have a good romp at once. As her trunk was unloaded, and her fare paid to Mr. Trotter, Mr. Lorgan leaned forward and presented his hand to Aunt Betsey, as he bid her good-bye, earnestly requesting her to retain his card, as he hoped to meet her again.

Then Mr. Trotter mounted his box, and with a "good-bye, Aunt Betsey," and a crack of his long whip, the stage went rattling along the Wissahickon road, to come again upon the turnpike, where the waters of the creek flow into the broad bosom of the Schuylkill.

### CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH AN ACQUAINTANCE IS MADE WITH THE
RIVERSON FAMILY.

OR the benefit of the reader, who may not be well acquainted with the shady dells and the bold hills and rocks that extend for miles

along the banks of the classic Wissahickon, one may perhaps pardon the curiosity of a guest, in walking about the place in the early dawn, before the members of the Riverson family are astir.

The long and rather low two storied stone house, in which the family lived, was situated on the north side of the road, and had been built perhaps one hundred years before, by the father or grandfather of old Colonel Riverson, and with its cedar shingles and bluish black stone, somewhat resembling slate, had withstood very well the ravages of time.

A short distance behind the house a rugged hill as-

cended abruptly, and was well covered with a forest growth rich in variety.

In front of the house proper, as well as along its side, was a fence made of pointed palings, split from chestnut timber. A door opened toward the road from the dining-room, and another one into the garden upon the north side of the house. On the south side of the road, nearly opposite the homestead, stood the old Red Mill, which had been grinding the farmers' grain in that region for many a year. The long sloping roof, made a third story for the mill, and the doors in each story, which opened down to the level of the floor. made it quite easy to hoist into or lower from each story the grain and flour, by aid of the beam which extended from the extreme peak of the steep roof, from which a pulley and rope was hanging. There was the dam a little above the mill, and the sluice which admitted its pent-up water upon the wheel. fifty vards above was the covered bridge across the stream, and from time immemorial both bridge and mill had been painted red.

The trees that hugged the stream so closely, made a cool shady retreat, into which the sun's rays did not often penetrate. Many beautiful and romantic spots are to be found along this stream, and are usually denominated "lover's retreats."

But the sun is already in the east, shedding radiance and strength upon all these genial surroundings, while smoke is now issuing from the kitchen chimney of the Riverson homestead. Mrs. John Riverson,

the widow, and mother of Marian and Ned Riverson, was a lady of rather stout figure, with a very pleasant, and to those who knew her best, even handsome face. But her highest charm consisted in the great love she bore her children, her dead husband and his family. The unbroken serenity of her disposition, the cheerful spirit with which she had always met the trials and vexations of life, were characteristics of this lady. Aunt Betsey loved Mrs. Riverson, and, indeed, who knew her that did not? In a very few minutes after Mrs. Riverson had started her fire that morning, Aunt Betsey appeared in the kitchen, dressed in a bright new calico wrapper, and looking as fresh and sparkling as a bottle of wine of rare vintage.

"Betsey Claybank," exclaimed Mrs. Riverson, when she discovered that lady's presence, "I would like to know what you, a visitor, are doing down stairs so early?"

"I can answer that question pretty quick, Mary Riverson, for I am not one of your lazy, fashionable visitors, as you know I came to help, as well as to visit with you; and I won't let you do all the cooking for this family, while I am here, either," said Aunt Betsey with a decided nod of the head. Mrs. Riverson essayed to reply to Aunt Betsey in her mild way, but that lady again broke in: "Now, Mary Riverson, don't say with your great loving heart, that you don't mind it, and that Prudence and Marian help you as much as you care to have them, for I know the truth. But never mind, dear, I will help you, and I'll be bound

somebody else will also, if a sharp tongue is worth anything." After unburdening herself of her opinions, Aunt Betsey seized a pair of cedar buckets, and passed out the kitchen door, following toward the spring, the path she knew so well. "Bless my soul," said she, soliloquizing as she passed along, "what a woman Mary is, I am afraid she won't live many years longer if this keeps on. Well, Marian is a good girl, though she does'nt realize that she ought to help her mother more. But I'll make her think she isn't much account when I take her in hand."

Marian Riverson was the next member of the family to make her appearance in the kitchen. She was a healthy, rosy girl of seventeen summers, with a face full of expression, and appeared to be a youthful, but more beautiful edition of her mother, with a face full of expression, blue eyes and light hair. Her form was well rounded, and her step possessed the elasticity of good health and much natural grace. Hastening to her mother, she kissed her affectionately, and said: "Why didn't you call me, Mamma? I wish to help you all I can."

"Yes, Marian, dear," returned the mother cheerfully, "I know you do, but young people like their sleep so well in the morning, I hadn't the heart to disturb you. I don't mind it, so what is the use? Aunt Betsey is already down and has gone to the spring after water, in spite of all I could say. But you know her well by this time, Marian."

"Yes, I think I do know Aunt Betsey," answered

Marian. "And none of us would like to go too long without seeing her at Riverson's Mill. I always thought she wanted to help every one of her friends, even when she was scolding them soundly. Shall I set the table, Mamma?"

"Yes, you may, Marian, and put on that fine linen tablecloth I made when I was a girl, and be sure to give Aunt Betsey the cup and saucer with the blue roses upon them."

Aunt Betsey here returned from the spring. "And so you're out of bed at last, are you, Miss Marian? It's a blessed pity I am not your mother, Marian Riverson. If I was, you'd help me a sight more than you ever do your mother," said Aunt Betsey, with a decided attempt at severity.

"Oh, you can't frighten me, you cross, dear old Aunt Betsey you," said Marian, putting her arms about her aunt's neck and kissing her. "Mamma will tell you that I have been helping her, and that I do so every day."

"Marian is a good girl, Betsey, and I think you know it, too."

"You might be worse than you are, Miss, of that I make no doubt. But your mother is too easy with both of you, and that's why it is a pity it wasn't Betsey Claybank you had to deal with."

Aunt Prudence, looking prim and stately, came into the dining-room at this juncture. Her eyes were black, her hair likewise, and her manner pleasant, though always dignified. She was hardly dressed for work, although she offered her service to her sister-in-law with a good will.

"Nothing at all, I believe, Prudence, for breakfast is just ready, and yet Neddy is not down-stairs. Marian, dear, call your brother, will you?" said Mrs. Riverson in gentle tones.

"Oh shucks!" said Aunt Betsey, "I'll bet that boy is sitting on the side of his bed, undressed and playing his fiddle, I can hear him now. I wonder if you two women are going to let that boy fool away his life with that fiddle?" looking severely at her two elderly cousins as she spoke. Mrs. Riverson then stepped to the foot of the back stairway leading up from the dining room, and called gently: "Neddy, my son, did you know we were ready to sit down to the breakfast-table?" No answer. Nothing but the music came floating down the stairway, one succession after another of beautiful strains, which the boy had in some manner learned, or improvised.

"If he wasn't such a big boy, I'd go up and wake him with a dipper of that spring water," Aunt Betsey snapped out. "But as it is," she continued, "I believe I would let him live on air and music awhile. May be that would cure him."

"Why, Betsey, dear, you are not used to Ned as we are. We don't mind him," said his indulgent mother.

"And it is pretty evident, sister Mary, that he doesn't mind you," Prudence remarked, with great gravity. At last the good natured, careless Ned made his appearance, his face all smiles and brightness as he greeted them all affectionately. He was a young lad, fifteen years of age, lively, affectionate, and possessing great good nature; his hair was almost black, and his complexion much darker than that of his sister Marian. In features he resembled the Riversons, while his character did not. On the other hand, Marian inherited her mother's comeliness, and was more like her grandfather, Colonel Riverson, in her thoughts and actions. This, at least, was the summing up of the case by Aunt Prudence to those with whom she conversed upon the subject.

Ned had Jerry with him, for he always insisted that he should share his quarters at night, when he was there on a visit. But Ned was not quite ready for breakfast, although he made that announcement; for he had forgotten his collar, his shoe-strings were untied, and his roundabout was only partly buttoned.

"Why, Ned," exclaimed Marian, "I should think you would be ashamed to come to the table in such a plight when we have company."

"How fussy you girls are, Marian. Why can't you learn to take life easier? I didn't want to keep you waiting, and so I stopped when I had made myself presentable. Aunt Betsey doesn't want me to consider her company. She is one of the family! That's where I place dear Aunt Betsey," concluded Ned triumphantly.

"I believe I shall have to give you up, Ned. You are a Riverson only in name, you hardly belong to the

family. If I did not know better, I should be willing to believe that your father and mother had bought you of some strolling band of Gypsies," said his Aunt Prudenće, sternly.

"Whew!" said Ned, with a prolonged whistle. "That's a new idea, Aunt Prude. I'll look into that when I have learned that piece I'm working on now."

"After all," exclaimed Aunt Betsey, "how could any one get angry with Ned?"

"Yes, Betsey, Ned is a very lovable boy, he comforts me a great deal with his music. He is a little careless, and seems indifferent to anything but music, as yet; but I think he will change after a little," said the patient mother.

"That is just like you, Mary," returned her dignified sister-in-law, "you know you are too easy with the boy for his own good."

"Oh! you are trying to make something out of Ned Riverson again, are you?" inquired that young gent-leman.

"We certainly should like to do so," replied his Aunt Prudence.

"But if my opinion is worth anything, Auntie, you can't make anything but a musician out of him. He thinks nothing else in this life is worth bothering about. The fact is, when he is playing upon his fiddle—as you call it—he can forget everything else, and imagine himself in that heaven, where all the good Sundayschool girls and boys go to when they die. And Ned has the advantage of enjoying it without dying. A

great deal better than the other, I can assure you," said the incorrigible musician.

"Ned, my dear," said his mother, "you should not talk so lightly about such subjects. You really must try and pay more attention to your studies, and not permit yourself to be so completely carried away with your music."

Ned arose from the table, and picking up Jerry, who was knowingly mewing by Aunt Betsey's side, he left the house and crossed the road to the mill. He entered the front door with Jerry in his arms. The bran and flour was pouring down the spouts, sending out a cloud of white dust, and Ned stopped to write his name and that of Jerry upon a number of barrels and boxes, when a voice was heard coming out of the depths of the mill, and a head soon appeared above the floor.

"Hello, Sydney," said Ned. "Good morning to you. Are you all alone to-day?"

"Yes, I shall have to get along to-day by myself, Ned," answered his companion, who now appeared at his full statue above the floor.

"The fact is, as you know perhaps, that there is scarcely enough profit in our business now to keep Mr. Bean all the time; so your Aunt Prudence thought I could get along very well alone, until she could manage to rent the mill to some capable man. I told her I would manage it the best I could until that had been accomplished, although I am very anxious to give up this situation and commence my life work."

The speaker was a hearty specimen of young manhood, not more than nineteen years of age; he was tall and well developed, and possessed a frank and manly countenance. His name was Sydney Ransom, and he had worked in the mill for seven years. No one could have been more faithful than this boy, from the time that John Riverson had employed him to do odd jobs about the mill. At the end of the period for which he had engaged him, John Riverson proposed to keep Sydney, and teach him the trade of miller.

John Riverson and his old father had both taken an active interest in Sydney, and this had been much increased after they learned that their contempt for the character of Tom Ransom was so undeserved by the son. The consequence was, that his employers tried to help him in every way, that he might make a good miller, to whom John Riverson could safely trust the management of the mill, when later in life he should wish to take life easier.

The boy became well acquainted with Marian and Ned Riverson through his association with the family in this humble capacity, and at length the three felt like old schoolmates toward each other. While Marian was attending school, it was very natural that she should talk to Sydney about her studies, until he became so much interested that she was soon leading him in the same direction. These studies he pursued in the evening at home, receiving all the encourage ment his hard-working mother could give him. Thus his patient search for culture had gone on year after

year, until Sydney had very much extended his mental horizon, and his thoughts and aspirations had risen far above the humble sphere he had thought so attractive and all-sufficient seven years before. He now felt very sensibly the change that he had experienced, and very naturally attributed the greater part of his success to the kindly interest of the Riverson family, and especially to Marian, who had helped him so much with his studies.

Ned soon tired of the old familiar sights and sounds of the mill. Of investigating for the thousandth time the mechanism of the water wheel, and the many contrivances of the mill that he could not quite understand; but one thing he could do: with his violin he could immitate the squeaking of the wheel and the machinery; and upon one occasion he made Sydney Ransom rush from the house in a great hurry, hearing, as he supposed, the great water-wheel, when he knew he had stopped it, while the sly Ned burst out with a hearty laugh the moment Sydney entered.

This morning Ned returned to the house, and having no school that day, he secured his violin, and striking into the forest on the north bank of the creek, was soon lost in its solitude.

"The mill inside is small and dark;
But peeping in the open door
You see the miller flitting round;
The dusty bags along the floor,
The whirling shaft, the clattering spout,
And the yellow meal a-pouring out."

STODDARD.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE FAMILY IN CONSULTATION.



O you mean to say, Prudence Riverson, that you have found no other property than this home, the mill, and the fifty acres of land.

along the creek, that was left to you by your father when he died?" asked Aunt Betsey, as the ladies sat upon the porch one afternoon.

Marian had some sewing in her hands, but she stopped and looked intently at Aunt Betsey, while she was speaking. "You have stated the case exactly, Betsey Claybank, and you know how it grieves and mixtifies me to say so. How could I help believing my father wealthy? Did he not sell farm after farm seven or eight years ago? And did not John and I know how much he received for them? Didn't we always have everything that was necessary for our comfort, no matter what it cost, if we could only get him to see it as we did? All these things were enough, I say, to make me feel sure of a competency when father and mother were taken from us."

As Aunt Prudence finished speaking, she leaned her head forward and pressed her hands to her temples, as if she would fain banish the disagreeable thoughts.

"Don't take it so hard, Prudence," said Aunt Betsey, with a much softer voice. "I am sure I pity, you

from the bottom of my heart, for it is a disappointment, and no mistake. Nor does it seem possible that you were all so much deceived about your father's wealth. But after all, it's no killing matter, and there is no use in crying over spilt milk, as I've said a hundred times before."

"Of course, I appreciate your sympathy, because I am sure you mean just what you say, Betsey," said Prudence, controlling herself with an effort, "but I don't know that you can understand, or quite appreciate my feelings, when I think of the position our family has maintained for the last hundred years. that it is almost impossible to procure comforts and necessaries, when we could afford and often procured the luxuries of life before this, is hard for me to bear. Then cousin Silas Riverson and his family—though the girls are most to blame, I must say—take such cruel pleasure in calling attention to our reduced circumstances, which they strongly suspect to be true, although they cannot ascertain it definitely. But I will never let them know it, nor do I tell any one about it, though I wouldn't attempt to carry it quite so far, as to try to conceal the truth from you, Betsey Claybank."

"Well, you can rest easy about their finding it out from me, Prudence," said Aunt Betsey. "But, indeed, you take it to much to heart. It is none of their business, and when they twit you with that which they merely suspect, I would not advise with them in any way. If there is nothing more for you—and surely by this time you ought to know it—just make up your mind to bear it, and don't worry and fret yourself by trying to maintain the imaginary dignity of the Riverson family. It's too much even for some men to do, Prudence, and you are not equal to the task."

"There it is again," said Prudence. "No one seems to understand me, nor sympathize with my family pride. I sometimes wish I had not inherited the concentrated pride of the family for the past hundred years. I suppose it is the burden that I must bear, and I shall endeavor to fight it out to the end. I will not give way either! I shall insist upon keeping this family together, and maintaining it in the rank to which it has always been accustomed. In one way or another I will do it, and with honor." This was spoken with a great deal of determination.

"I am sure," said Mrs. Riverson mildly, "I do not see what you can do to give us more money, or to enable us to live as we used to do, unless some of us go to work and earn something."

"I will find some way to bring it about, Mary, and without compelling one of our family to work for wages. I know my father was not afraid of work; but he worked for himself, a very different matter from working for some one else for wages. That is too lowering. If any of you wish to disgrace the family in that way, I only hope the good Lord will first call me to my final home," said the energetic, but proud woman.

"You do your part and more too, Mary Riverson,

and you needn't talk about doing more, I am sure," said Aunt Betsey with vigor.

Marian had hitherto remained silent, but her manner betokened an intense interest in this discussion of the family affairs, and it was plain that nothing but her youth in the presence of her elders—and which was then much more effectual than now—had prevented her from participating in the conversation up to this moment.

"For my part, Aunt Prudence," said Marian at last, "I would like to find some suitable employment that would give me a fair compensation. Nor can I see for the life of me, what harm there would be in it, or how it would disgrace us in the least. We need so many things now, and scarcely enough money comes from the mill to give us the necessaries of life, that I am tired of sitting around doing nothing helpful, and all because our family pride will not permit it. I don't believe it is sensible for us to act in this way, and I do want to help ever so much. There is teaching school for instance—"

"Mary Riverson, if you have not the courage to compel your daughter to respect her obligations to her family, I believe I have. And I will say to you, Miss Marian, that I don't want to hear you mention school-teaching again, or any other employment for t at matter. How delightful it would sound, to hear the neighbors talk about Colonel Riverson's grand-daughter teaching school, or working in a milliner shop," Aunt Prudence concluded with much sarcasm.

"You needn't expect me to uphold you in any such nonsensical ideas of pride as those you have just expressed, Prudence Riverson, that I can tell you," said Aunt Betsey, with vehemence. "I believe I knew your father very well, and he entertained no such balderdash as that. I thought you were a sensible woman. You have now been alone more than a year, and what else is there for you to do, than for each one to help all he can? That's practical common sense, and Betsey Claybank always did go strong for that in everything."

Aunt Prudence colored slightly, and pressed her lips firmly together, as if she were making a strong effort to prevent Betsey's words from provoking an angry retort, but at length she said: "I hope we shall never forget your friendly interest in us, but in a question of this kind I cannot be influenced by you, Betsey; for I see plainly enough that you do not understand my feelings."

"Well, it is not Betsey Claybank who can play the hypocrite by pretending that she can, and what is more, she don't care to try. But if you want to do something, and do not know what is best to do, I think I can help you, and God knows I want to do that," said Aunt Betsey.

"I am sure you know very well, Aunt Prudence," interposed Marian, "that I ought to have a new silk dress, if I continue to go into society, as you have always urged me to do. You also know that your own dresses are a little out of style now, and that none of

us have had anything new since Grandpa and poor Papa died. I would rather stay at home than be obliged to hear Lucy and Julia Riverson ask me, whether I intended to have my new summer silk made up, 'for, of course, you will get one,' they both say in the same breath. Don't interrupt me," she said, as her Aunt attempted to say something, "for I must unburden my mind to-day. Then there is our carriage that we have always been proud of; with the clothlining all worn through, and the leather ripping off the bows. It is too bad! What a pity we did not coax grandfather to buy us a new one before he died. I am sure he could have done it as well as not."

"That is only a gratuitous assumption on your part, Marian," said Aunt Prudence, "for we now have every reason to believe that your grandfather could not have bought one for us just as well as not, or he certainly would have left us his money. It is true, he was a trifle queer about some things, eight or ten years before he died, and this fact is my sole reason for hesitating to believe that his affairs were in reality as we have found them."

"Just now I was thinking of Mr. Lorgan," said Aunt Betsey, "the gentleman whose acquaintance I made in the stage the day I came here. You know he is a banker in the city, and he seemed very much interested in your family, and although I thought once or twice from the way he looked at nothing and talked to it, that he might have been sick, or was just out of the asylum at Norristown, he appeared wonderfully

interested when I told him some of your father's notions and habits, Prudence. I believe he would advise you well—"

"What do you mean, Betsey Claybank, by telling our private troubles to an entire stranger? Goodness, what thoughtlessness with all your practical sense," said Prudence, with anger. "I am glad that I know what is due our station in life, and can maintain it. Do you think I would go to him for advice when I can consult Judge Howard, one of the best business men in this part of the country? I have no doubt that I could borrow money from him also, if I wished to do so."

"Yes, you can borrow money easily enough from Judge Howard, especially if he wishes Albert to marry Marian. Bless you, girl, don't take on so "—as Marian blushed and covered her face with her hands—"Aunt Betsey didn't think she would say that when she began; but that is what she thought about it, and I guess she might as well say it, inasmuch as she's a plain spoken woman. But how would you ever pay back borrowed money, Prudence? For Judge Howard don't lend money for friendship, but for eight or ten per cent interest; at least all over six he can squeeze out."

"I have a much higher opinion of Judge Howard than you seem to entertain, Betsey," said Aunt Prudence. "I am sure that he would be very glad to assist us, either with money or good advice. At any rate, I should prefer to call upon him, and shall prob-

ably do so this fall, or next spring. If Mr. Bean will lease the mill, and give us fifty dollars a month, we can get along very well this winter, and few will be the wiser. I intend to hold my head with the highest, and so shall the rest of the family."

"I am fearful that for one I shall not be able to come up to your expectations, Prudence, dear," said Mrs. Riverson gently. "I doubt whether the good Lord meant that I should hold my head above my brothers and sisters. I will see that you get something proper to eat, and will keep the wardrobes in order; but the dignity of the family will devolve upon you. Indeed it must."

"Nonsense, Mary," returned her sister-in-law. You carry democracy too far. The rabble are beneath you, and it is the duty of their superiors to teach them their proper place, and not permit them to forget it; and you can do that as well as any one."

"Pray, what are you going to say to Mr. Bean about the mill, Aunt Prudence?" asked Marian. "Sydney said he was anxious to have Mr. Bean or some one else take charge of it soon, as he has fully determined to begin the study of medicine."

"Yes, and we have you to thank for that piece of business, I believe. How much better it would be for Sydney Ransom to remain a miller, coming from such a family as he does," said Prudence, with sneering tones.

"Why, Aunt Prudence! Are you not ashamed to speak slightingly of Sydney Ransom? Just think how

faithful he has been to our family for seven years? And what did I have to do with it, but to help him by advice and encouragement to make of himself a better man than his father? I think that was as little as I could do for him in return for his devotion to our interests," said Marian, earnestly.

"Well, Sydney has been a good boy, and is one now; but he will soon be a man, yet for all that I think it is no kindness you have rendered him, Marian. To make one dissatisfied with his station in life is a very questionable proceeding, if you have his interest at heart. But please go and ask Sydney if he can step over to the house a few minutes. You can remain in the mill while he is away," said her Aunt Prudence.

Marian hurried across the road to the mill, and found Sydney on the lower floor.

"Good afternoon, Miss Marian. What can I do for you?" Sydney asked.

"My Aunt wishes you to step over to the front porch, Sydney, I will watch the mill during your absence."

"Very well. I believe you know how to stop the machinery, do you not?"

"Yes, indeed, thanks to you, I can manage it," answered Marian. "You need not hurry."

"Mr. Ransom," said Miss Prudence, as the young miller stepped upon the porch, "I wish to ask you about Mr. Bean's proposition in reference to the mill. That is, if he has made any to you?"

"Yes, Miss Prudence, he has been talking to me,

about it. He said that times were very hard, and one would have to sell so much on trust—as you know very well—that he could not think of giving over fifty dollars a month for the mill, besides keeping it in ordinary repair. That is what he said last night, when I met him at Omensetter's store."

"Pshaw," exclaimed Prudence Riverson, with disgust. "I think Mr. Bean wants it all. He could easily afford to give a hundred. Why can't you make up your mind to continue to run it, Sydney? It pays about that now, does it not?"

"No, ma'am, your profit last month was not over forty dollars; but you see, Mr. Bean is an experienced miller, and can make money where I could not. And then it is possible, I do not measure just right, but I do like to give enough. And Miss Prudence. you have all treated me so well for the past seven years, that it really pains me to leave you. Nor will I do so until some disposition is made of the mill that is satisfactory to you, but I cannot consent to make this my life work. I may be wrong, but if I would not be dissatisfied all my life I must become a physician. I am quite anxious to begin as soon as possible, but I do not wish to leave you until you have this matter arranged. I hope I shall not be unwelcome, if I come here once a week to see that the old mill is not being abused, Miss Prudence?"

"You can always expect to be made welcome here, Sydney, I believe a Riverson will always know how to reward faithful service, such as yours has been. I

suppose we will be obliged to 'let Mr. Bean have the mill on his terms. Don't you think so, Mary?" she said, addressing her sister-in-law.

"Oh, I don't pretend to know what is best to do with the mill, Prudence. Do as you think right, and I will join you in the necessary papers. I wish to thank you for your great kindness to us in the past, Sydney," said the gentle lady with considerable feeling, "and I want you to come often to see us."

Then it was all arranged between them, and Sydney walked thoughtfully back to the mill. He could not help comparing these two ladies. He noticed that Prudence Riverson insisted upon reminding him that he had served them faithfully for pay, and deserved some recognition and praise for it. At the same time she seemed to hope that he would not forget the difference in their stations.

But with Mrs. Riverson, how different. She was anxious to remind him that she was his friend, and he had no doubt about her welcome. And Marian was very much like her mother, perhaps a little more positive and energetic. He did not like the idea of leaving this beautiful spot, with all its pleasant associations, now that the time was at hand. With his head lowered, he walked mechanically back to the mill. Here he was aroused by Marian's voice.

"You look troubled, Sydney. What is the matter?" she asked.

"Nothing but the thoughts of leaving this old mill, where so many happy hours of my life have been

spent," he replied. "Your father and grandfather were very kind to me, while you have helped me to climb into a different world from that in which I had been living. You must permit me to thank you for what you have done. Mr. Bean is to have the mill, and I shall work here but a few days longer, Miss Marian," he said with sadness.

"Why, you really talk as if you were sorry you were about to succeed in this new and ambitious project of yours. I can scarcely understand it," said Marian, laughing. Then resuming, she asked: "You have seen Doctor Kennedy, have you not?"

"Oh yes, and he thinks my preliminary education will answer very well, with the assistance he will be able to give me; and that I can expect to get through my studies in four years. Even there your help has been very efficient. I will not attempt to thank you for it now, as you deserve. But it may be that I will yet have an opportunity to show my gratitude, especially if the day should ever come when my assistance would be of any possible value to you."

"I am sure that you place an extravagant estimate upon any service I may have rendered you. But I am sure that we shall be glad to see you succeed in the new field you have chosen. I must be going to the house now, so good-bye," said Marian in reply.

"Good-bye, Miss Marian," said Sydney, with marked deference, as Marian passed out the door and tripped lightly across the road to the house.

## CHAPTER IV.

## TELLS ABOUT SYDNEY RANSOM AND HIS FAMILY.

YDNEY RANSOM gathered together into a bundle the various articles that had served him so well during his seven years' service in

the old mill, then he put everything belonging to the mill in its proper place, and took his leave. Then he locked the mill door, carried the great key to the house, and shaking hands with the various members of the Riverson family, bade them a sorrowful good-bye. After these last offices had been performed, he started for his home on the Ridge, and left behind him forever the old mill with its dusty barrels and bins.

Ned Riverson disliked very much to see Sydney leave. He had always entertained a boyish regard for Sydney, who knew that Ned's regret was sincere. He accompanied Sydney from the house and beyond the mill to the old red bridge, through which Sydney must pass to reach his home and there he took leave of him.

"I hope you will come at least once a week to see us, Sydney?" said that young gentleman. "Even then it won't be half often enough for me; for it will do us all good to see you. And whenever you can ride over this way with Doctor Kennedy, when he visits his pa-

tients, you must do so," continued Ned with earnestness. "I will ride over to Manayunk occasionally to see you. If I ever get a chance to take music lessons, I mean to be a great musician, Sydney. O, my! how I do love music. Well, good-bye, old fellow, I can't keep you standing here all night, that's certain," and then Sydney, after again wringing the hand of his friend, stepped briskly into the bridge, was soon across it and lost to Ned's view upon the opposite bank. Sydney walked rapidly at first, but as his way led some distance along the bank of the stream before turning southward to ascend the bold hill which here guarded its waters, his pace grew more measured, as his thoughts became more active.

He recalled very vividly the pleasure he had experienced seven years before, when John Riverson chose him out of a large family, that needed the aid of every bread-winner it could put in the field. escape all day from the querulous complainings of his shiftless father, boy though he was, added much to the measure of his happiness. And then he was helping to lighten his poor overworked mother's burdens, and that knowledge increased his boyish self-respect very much indeed. How proudly he brought his first wages, and poured the bright shining dollars into her lap! What a glow of honest pride was infused into her weary heart, over the son who gave such promise of walking through life in a more industrious path than his father! And how anxious he had been to please the Riverson's.

When at last he felt that he had become in a measure necessary to the mill and the family who owned it, it thrilled him as he saw his mother living quietly with him in the great future, wholly relieved from the toil to which she had been accustomed the greater part of her life. "Dear Mother," he thought, "how I want to relieve you, and when I become a man, my wife shall not work as you have done, unless I should be sick and disabled, and in that event I believe I should quietly slip into the creek, and let myself go down to the bottom."

Miss Marian had lent him books, and advised him what to read and to study. Then it had gradually dawned upon him, that because his family had occupied such an humble station among these people, was not a good and sufficient reason why he should continue to plod along in the selfsame path his parents had traveled before him. Why could he not do as other boys had done? And as his reading gradually became more extensive, and his tastes and ability to comprehend increased, he perceived at last, that what had been so attractive before, was fast becoming irksome, if not actually repulsive to him.

Sydney reached at last the gate of his quiet home, and as Rover came jumping about him, he told him to get down, when the dog, perceiving that his young master was in no mood for a frolic that evening, ran away and did not annoy him while he was walking to the kitchen door. His mother, a thin-faced, overworked matron, with an intelligent countenance, was

dressed very plainly, though with great neatness, as she sat by the side of the supper-table, mending the family stockings.

The father was also at home, and was sitting by the window that looked out upon the lane, up which Sydney had walked from the mill. Thomas Ransom, the head of the family, was about fifty-five years of age; a carpenter by trade, but who, although of robust frame and appearance, managed to be sick when work in his line was plenty at good wages, and when work was scarce and wages low, he would not stoop to work, for fear of encouraging the rich in their robbery of the poor. So he sat idly in and out of the house the greater part of the time, complaining in one way or another, while his wife worked and bothered her tired brain over the household problem of making every cent do double duty.

Ars Ransom owned this story and a half house—that had been built some time during the previous century of a peculiar slate colored stone. If it had not been given to Mrs. Ransom by her father, no doubt it would long ere this have passed out of the ontrol of the Ransom family. An acre of ground accrounded the house, upon which were numerous strees, raspberry and blackberry bushes, and other small fruits. The apples and pears which the orchard yielded, were usually more than enough to keep the hungry herd of young Ransoms from pining for these luxuries of the rich.

Tom Ransom thought the prairies of the great West

would be the proper place to respond to the kind of genius he possessed; and many were the days he spent in discussing the journey there in wagons, the encampments by the way, the dangers to be happily overcome, and the final settlement. But Mrs. Ransom was not disposed to emigrate to that land of promise. She had to work hard enough as it was; and having been privately informed that western farms were women-killing establishments, she made up her mind not to make the experiment.

At last, experience taught her that it was best to let him alone, and simply refuse to sign the deed when he approached her with a purchaser for their house. So Tom's stories of adventure in the West usually ended with this statement:

"If the old woman would only consent to sell the old shebang, we'd be out there mighty quick, I can tell you."

But Ransom was not really so bad as he was painted, nor so shiftless; for when a neighbor was anxious to have some carpenter work done, when workmen were scarce, it was possible to induce Tom to do it, by listening a couple of hours to his complaints, and then paying him half a day's wages in advance.

"I am very sorry that I have kept you from clearing off the table so long, mother," said Sydney, as he entered the room, and proceeded to take off his coat and hang it up carefully upon a nail behind the door. Then he put away his butter-kettle, the daily companion of the working man in this part of the world.

"Oh, I don't mind it much to-night, my on, for I know too well what it means," his mother replied, looking at him with considerable pride while she was speaking.

"Yes, but you don't seem to care that it is thirty dollars a month less to come into this here family, ma'am," said Mr. Ransom, from his seat by the window, in his peculiar piping voice, so out of proportion to his almost gigantic frame. The mother and son exchanged keen glances, and then Mrs. Ransom said severely:

"Perhaps you would like to keep his nose on those millstones all his life, Tom Ransom? But you can't do it. The boy's got it in him to be something better, thank God, and he's going to go ahead with it, if I have to work my finger nails off to make up what we will lose by it just now."

"I am glad to know that you will not have much of that to do, mother," said Sydney, as he seated himself at his accustomed place, and began to eat his supper.

"With such a stout son as Sydney to help us, we could all be rich in a few years out West," persisted the indefatigable Ransom, senior, returning to the charge. "But then you don't want to better your condition, oh no. You only want to keep me here in slavery. Children are all more undutiful now-a-days than they used to be, and mine ain't any better than the rest of 'em."

"I should think if there was any one in slavery in this household, that it was my mother," said Sydney sharply. "She is the only one who is burdened with work from morning till night."

"Yes; that's what you always say, but if this country was not so thickly settled that it's about gone to the dogs, I could do something and get my machines into notice, and make a fortune for you all. That's what I am burdening myself with, young man. And what's more, I'll do it some of these days, when I can get away from this place. And when I do, I suppose there'll be a change in all of you. I reckon I would be a mighty nice father to you then?"

Sydney was not materially affected by these upbraiding comments. He continued his meal, only glancing toward his mother, as though he would say:

"There is the same old story, that we are all so tired of hearing."

"At any rate," said Sydney, after a time, "I have obtained Doctor Kennedy's consent to take me as his student, and also to give me work part of the time in his drug store. In this way I shall still be able to help mother and the rest of you. Some day I shall be able to do more. I know I shall succeed at last; for I will not think of failure; and then mother, dear, you shall rest all the time," he concluded, with a softened tone of voice, that clearly indicated the affection he bore her, whose life had been so embittered by her struggles with poverty.

"Well," said the father in reply, "after all, may be it will turn out well enough, since it can't be helped. For then at least you will be willing to go out West to practice medicine. You won't be dunce enough to think any one around here would want you to tend 'em, when they are sick."

"That is just what I will not do, sir," said Sydney, "for I intend to stay here and show my friends the quality of the metal I have in me. I am no coward."

"I did not suppose you was a fool, but I see I was mistaken," said his father, in a manner that was meant to be conclusive, but which really had very little effect upon the son, either to arouse feelings of anger or sorrow.

Early the next morning, Sydney Ransom might have been seen walking up the Ridge Road to Green Lane, down which he passed until he had reached the little city of mills and factories, and upon the main business street of which Doctor Kennedy, the oldest and most prominent of the several physicians of the place, had his drug store and office.

The Doctor was a man of fine figure, a good natured countenance, and a kindly manner, which did not give the lie to his face. His hair and beard were white as the driven snow, and for all the above reasons, perhaps, he was the favorite of the ladies and most of the children in that part of the country; and the esteem in which he was held was so general, that it caused him no loss of sleep when Doctor Monroe located in the village, and announced publicly that he came among them as an apostle of the new medical faith, and won some of the children to his side soon after with his sugar pills. But Sydney never thought for a moment of

taking up with any new-fangled notions of that kind. They all knew Doctor Kennedy, and who could gainsay his word in medical matters with any show of success? Nor could we expect him to have any patience with such heresy. And Doctor Kennedy had relied almost wholly upon Marian Riverson's recommendation of Sydney Ransom, when he decided to give that young man a trial. He was always ready to do a favor for the family of Colonel Riverson, and as for Marian, he had known and loved her all her life; and having promoted her earliest respirations, what could he refuse that she might ask of him?

## CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH PROFESSOR CARL AND KENO ARE INTRO-DUCED.



OME, Marian," said Ned Riverson, pleadingly to his sister one Saturday afternoon, "let us take a holiday excursion up the north

bank of the creek. We can have a jolly time and you may eat as many wintergreen leaves as you please. Say yes, Sis, that's a good girl."

"I suppose you will take your violin along," said Marian, laughingly.

"Now don't be mean, Sis. I will promise to get all the pretty flowers for you and any pretty birds' eggs we come across. If you want me when I am playing, just shake me up a little," continued Ned, coaxingly.

"If you will promise to go farther than my bower, and will not ask me to stop there, I will go. I want to go beyond the monastery and possibly as far as 'The Devil's Pool,'" said Marian.

Ned gave a long whistle. "Why you are in for a trip, Marian, but you can't walk me down, I can tell you that," he said, defiantly.

Procuring a tin cup and a little basket containing some nice bread and butter and half a cheese-cake, the brother and sister were soon ready to spend their holiday.

It was a warm afternoon in the latter part of August. After the rain the day before, everything in nature was propitious for taking to the woods. Ned took the lead with his violin in his hand, and instead of following the road across the bridge, he started up the hill; but before he reached the summit, he turned along the bank, and started off through the woods, leading Marian up the creek. The forest was very dense on the north bank in those days—in fact, it is enough so at the present time—but Ned and Marian were used to dodging in and out among the trees, now avoiding a thicket, and then swinging a dangling grape-vine out of their path, while they made their way quite rapidly along.

"What is that noise, Marian?" asked Ned, after some moment's pause.

"It sounds to me like running water, Ned. But go and see," answered his sister.

Presently Ned's voice was heard calling to his sister, nor was he far away. "O, Marian, come and see the cutest little waterfall and spring you ever saw along the Wissahickon."

Sure enough, when Marian reached the spot, she found a little brook bubbling down the side of the hill, while at this point a large flat rock projected from the ground, over which the water was pouring in a silvery spray, to fall into the pool fifteen feet below.

They seated themselves below the fall on the brink of the pool, and drank several times of its cool water, for the walk had made them thirsty.

"What a beautiful place this is, Ned. Where in the world are we?" Marian asked, with much interest.

"Wait a minute, Sis, and I'll find out," exclaimed Ned, as he ran away.

"O, Ned, stop this minute!" cried out his sister, imperatively.

"What do you want now?" asked Ned, petulantly, as he returned.

"I only want you to leave your violin with me, for then I know you will come back," she replied.

"You are a tease," was all he said, as he handed her his violin, and then disappeared. Presently he returned and informed Marian that Conrad's lane was only a hundred yards distant, and upon the other side of that—as Marian very well knew—stood the dilapidated buildings of the monastery of the Wissahickon.

"Then let us stop here," answered his sister. "I am too tired to think of attempting the Devil's Pool

to-day. Suppose we take Dolly and the Dearborn wagon and drive up the township line road, when we go to the Pool? What do you say, Ned?"

"Why, that will be just the thing, Sis. Now you pick your flowers, while I play a little. I declare, I don't more than get started on a piece at home before Aunt Prude is calling to me to stop that music, and go and help my mother. Or else she is tired to death list ning to my tunes. Do you think we shall ever have enough money, so I can take lessons again and become a great musician?" asked Ned, with a great deal of earnestness, looking at his sister very wistfully as he spoke.

"I hope so, Ned. Indeed I do!" said his affectionate sister. "I try to love music as much as I possibly can, just because you are such a goose about it, for y u do have a pretty hard time at home over your music. But cheer up, Ned, cheer up!" she continued, with a pretty toss of t e head.

"You'r a jewel, Sis," was all he said, as she walked up the hill in search of flowers.

In a very few minutes Ned had forgetten the worl!, the woods, and the rippling stream failing into its rocky basin beside him. He was oblivious to all but the emotions aroused within him by the varying notes of his voolin. He was playing something he had heard at a concert in the city, to which his kind and indulgent father had taken him—much to the disgust of his sister Princence—only a year before his father's antimely death. Ned did not know the music, but

he believed he could tell by the feelings it aroused within him, what the composer must have intended to accomplish. If he had not been so completely lost to all about him, he would have heard several calls addressed to him, and which Marian, much farther away, heard quite plainly. Following this came other words, "Keno! Keno! come here, you little villain. Be still! Hush!" and then for some moments all was still, until Marian, thinking she had been mistaken, resumed her search for flowers.

When Ned at length ceased his playing and awoke, the earth came back to him in the shape of a desire for a drink of water, and then he was astonished, even somewhat fright ned, to hear close at hand a voice loudly cheering his performance. The next moment he heard the crackling of twigs under the tread of heavy feet approaching him, and then a fat jolly-faced man came bounding up to him.

"Why, who the deuce are you, pray? Give me your hand," said the stranger, taking his reluctant hand and shaking it nearly off. "That was music! By jiminey, my boy, you can play!"

Then noticing that Ned was about to retreat, entertaining perhaps some fears as to the stranger's sanity, the excitable gentleman recovered himself.

"Don't go, I would like to hear you play some other pieces. I am Carl Rother, of Germantown, and I teach music for a living. If you live near here, perhaps you have heard of Professor Carl, for that is what they usually call me."

Just then Marian returned, thinking Ned might need her help, and when Professor Carl saw her, he immediately started back a step or two, and taking off his hat very politely, hoped he was not taking too great a liberty. "The fact is, my dear Miss, I heard this boy playing, and knowing what music with soul and expression is, I had to listen. I am Professor Carl, as I just told the young man, and perhaps he is your brother, Miss?" said he, inquiringly

"Yes, sir," answered Marian, much amused by the Professor's appearance and his speech; "you are right, he is my brother, Ned Riverson; and we live down the creek, by the old red bridge and grist mill."

"Indeed, I know the place very well, and I am delighted to make your acquaintance," said the Professor with enthusiasm. Then the little black-and-tan terrier that accompanied their new acquaintance, began to whine; and looking up at his master, threatened to break away.

"Keno! you little rascal, don't you chase any more rabbits. Why, don't you think," looking at Ned and Marian as he spoke, "the villain has tried to eat up two or three rabbits this afternoon. Lie down, sir; and no whining!"

Keno with a sheepish look proceeded to settle himself near his master's feet. Ned was at once amused and interested. "Yes," continued Professor Carl, "that is a funny dog. He is a musical dog, and you must not make a false note when he is around. Just let me show you," he continued, as he reached for

Ned's violin, which was given to him. At once he proceeded to play a familiar air, but in the midst of one of the finest strains, he purposely sounded several discordant notes. Keno at once jumped to his feet and howled very dismally in his master's face till Professor Carl stopped playing.

Marian and Ned were delighted with Professor Carl and his dog, and were quite extravagant in their expressions of admiration for Keno's intelligence.

"I never saw so intelligent and such a musical dog before," said Ned. "I suppose he loves and appreciates correct music?"

"Yes, he is very fond of it. But when my scholars are taking their lessons, I see to it that Keno is out of the way; for if they make a discord he sets up such a wail, that all the superstitious old ladies insist upon it that some one has to die. Ha! ha!" laughed the cheery old fellow. "But I wish to ask you, Master Ned, if you know the music that you were playing when I came up?"

"No, sir. It was performed at a concert in the city that I attended, more than a year ago. I remembered it and played it after I came home. At first I could not get it right, at least not all of it; but I kept on until I succeeded," said Ned.

"Yes, but how did you know how to play it? I mean when to play slow, and when fast; with all those changes which a musician calls expression?" added the Professor.

"Oh, I don't have any trouble with that," said Ned,

innocently. "I don't know how I do it, or whether I do it correctly or not. But, indeed, I would like to learn ever so much," Ned concluded.

"And I want to tell you,"—and here the Professor placed his right index finger by the side of his nose, which he always did when he wished to be impressive—"that you have rendered that selection from the overture to Semiramede, with the same expression that I could possibly give it, and I have been a musician all my life Rossini is my favorite composer. That is why I could not pass by, when I heard such music. Who is your teacher, Ned?" he asked in conclusion.

"I have no teacher, sir." Ned replied, with sorrow.

"Donner and Blitzen," exclaimed Professor Carl, who possessed the peculiarity, when very much excited, of resorting to the German exclamations of his father.

"Excuse me, Miss Riverson," he resumed, "but it makes me angry when I think that such a boy is not taking lessons in music every day of his life. It is a shame! The boy is a musical genius. I tell you I know what I am talking about," and now the Professor became furious at the imaginary enemy to music, his deity.

Marian looked a trifled terrified, and the Professor noticing it, checked himself at once.

"Don't mind me, Miss Riverson. Bless your soul, I would not harm anyone. But this is something that raises my Dutch, as we often say. Is your father alive?"

"No, sir, he died some time ago," answered Marian.

"I am so sorry," returned Professor Carl. "My father knew your grandfather very well. In fact it was through him, my friends, that my old father-who came over to this country as a Hessian soldier to help whip the rebellious subjects of old King Georgecame to live in this country. While their army was cooped up in the city, he was captured by Colonel Riverson one day, and they became friends after that. My father saw so much of the patriot army and its privations, that he began to hate the service he was in, and as soon as the British army had been driven out of Philadelphia, he took the first good opportunity to de-Then he sought Colonel Riverson, and he directed him to Germantown, where he settled, was married and raised a family of four children, and helped me with my music, as long as he lived. Poor man! How he did love to hear me play the organ." Here the Professor's voice became husky with emotion.

"I see that you play upon the violin as well," said Marian, now interested more than ever.

"Oh dear, yes, Miss Riverson. I play a little upon a number of instruments. When music is in the soul, it must find expression. Under such circumstances one cares for nothing else, while the music is going on. All is forgotten then, and the world becomes a paradise. Ach mein Gott," said he enthusiastically, again relapsing into his father's tongue, "those who do not possess this gift can never know the divine ecstacy which nature has seen fit to withhold from them. There is nothing higher in the way of enjoyment."

"That is just what poor Ned often tells me, when we scold him for being so heedless, while he is playing," said Marian smiling. "Only he could not express it as you do."

"He is young, Miss, and he must have instruction and encouragement. He will make a great musician. If you permit me to accompany you home, I will see your mother about it," said Professor Carl, seriously.

Marian knew that her Aunt Prudence would have the most to say, which would, no doubt, appear strange to the Professor; and yet she did not see how she could well prevent the interview the cheery musician was so anxious for, moved thereto by the kindness of his heart and his great love of music.

"I am afraid it will do no good, sir," answered Marian. "My mother hardly thinks music a very good profession for a man, and you might think it strange and——"

"Get angry, you were about to say, Miss Riverson," as Marian began to hesitate, somewhat at a loss for words with which to express her fears.

"Now, Marian," said honest Ned, less diplomatic than his sister, "you know that mamma would not stand in the way of my doing anything I had set my heart upon so earnestly, if only Aunt Prudence wouldn't make a fuss, and money was plenty."

"Why, Ned Riverson," exclaimed his more dignified sister, "you forget yourself. It is simply a question as to what is best for you."

"No it ain't, Marian, and it's no use for you to stand

up there and say so. And I hope Professor Carl will see mamma and Aunt Prude about it."

"That's right, Ned. I am glad you are on my side. And never fear, you shall be a musician Where there is a will, there must be a way. I can persuade your mother and aunt. I hope we will have your assistance, Miss Marian," turning very politely towards her.

"I could never stand in the way of Ned's happiness, so I will promise to do all I can," Marian replied.

"I thank you very much indeed. Then if you say the word, we will start at once. Keno! Keno! Where are you, you little rascal?"

When they reached the house, Marian conducted Professor Carl to the front door, and invited him into the parlor. But the Professor was heated from his walk, and begged the privilege of sitting upon the porch.

"What a delightful home! What grand hills! Ah, the very place for a poet, or a musician to be born," exclaimed the delighted musician.

Marian entered the house, and soon returned with her mother and Aunt Prudence. Professor Carl was very gracious to both ladies, and seemed to take to the cheerful Mrs. Riverson at once. He praised their home, the scenery, and everything he had seen and learned that afternoon from his young friends, refering pleasantly to Ned and Marian.

"I have been here before, ladies," said Professor Carl, "but it was several years ago. I formed the habit of roaming in the woods around and beyond the monastery, and you know how we form habits and cling to them." He then told the ladies his story of the friendship between his father and Colonel Riverson, and Prudence remembered to have heard her father speak of it.

"Mrs. Riverson," said the Professor, turning to that lady, I wish to say to you that you have a son who possesses great talent for music. In fact, ma'am, I will say genius. And what Professor Carl says, he means. I heard him in the woods to-day by accident. I am a music-teacher in Germantown. Your son needs the instruction I can give him, and when he gets beyond me, I will refer you to another one in the city. But he must have musical instruction. Indeed, he must!" said he, earnestly. Poor Ned was intensely interested. He felt that it was the crisis of his life.

Mrs. Riverson, being unaccustomed to decide any question relating to her children, did not reply at once, but smiled pleasantly at the Professor, and then looked at her sister-in-law. As that lady was inclined to resent what she called his impertinence, in not addressing his request to her in the first place, she gave no sign of taking this burd n upon herself, and therefore Mrs. Riverson—too kind to appear impolite—re plied:

"You are very good to think so highly of Ned's musical ability, Professor Rother, but we hardly see how we can spare him from his other studies just

now," she concluded, in a hesitating manner, looking again at her sister-in-law, as if appealing once more for the assistance of her strong will.

"You mean," responded Prudence, at last, "that we don't want a Riverson to spend his whole life dawdling away his time with a fiddle. But you were afraid you would hurt the Professor's feelings, inasmuch as he is a musician," concluded Prudence, sternly.

Professor Carl's face flushed, and he felt himself growing angry, but he exerted himself to control his fiery temper.

"I am sorry, Miss Prudence, that you have so little music in your soul, that you can talk in that way about our divine art. It is the grandest pleasure the Almighty has given to humanity. And when one of his creatures is possessed of this rare gift, as your nephew is, is it not a duty? an obligation? to cultivate it and be thankful for it?"

"I know," resumed Prudence, "that men or women who do nothing but play upon musical instruments, do not amount to much in the world. They are never troubled much with this world's goods, and their children are very apt to go hungry, and to be indifferently clothed."

"And is happiness to be counted for nothing? What do I care for money? And why should I care for it? There are always children to be taught, and I can make enough to feed Keno and me, and that is all I need in this world. And I promise you, madame,

that no King could be happier than I am," concluded the Professor, bowing and smiling at Prudence with the utmost politeness.

"We think that Ned Riverson should be a lawyer," resumed Prudence. "Our family is an old one, as you are no doubt aware, and as he is the only son, we do not feel like giving way to a boy's whim."

"It is no whim, I tell you," exclaimed the Professor, again exhibiting signs of excitement. "He cannot help it. He was made just as he is by God Almighty, and you cannot make him again. Do not, I beg of you, spoil his whole life. I will do anything I can. I will teach him as much as possible for several years I want no money; it is not for that I take an interest in him."

"If you think, sir, that a Riverson could for a moment think of accepting such favors, you are much mistaken. It is purely a question as to the boy's best interests," said Prudence, with dignity.

"You are very kind, indeed, Professor Carl," said Mrs. Riverson, interposing at this moment, to soften the refusal of her sister-in-law, "but you see how it is; and I am afraid it is not possible to decide upon anything to-day. We shall be obliged to consider the matter further."

"I thank you very much for that, Mrs. Riverson, and I hope Miss Riverson will excuse me for the offer I made, as I had no thought of offending her? I am not as observant of these things as I should be, perhaps, though I feel kindly toward every one. I want

this boy to have his heart's desire. I will see you again in a few days, when I hope to present my request in a way that you cannot refuse. I have had a delightful afternoon, and I thank you all for it. Will you show me the nearest path over the hill, Ned, my boy?" asked the Professor, in conclusion.

As they passed out of the gate together, the Professor again looked around, that he might enjoy the beauty of the landscape spread out before him. After feasting his ever hungry soul with these beauties of nature, and looking toward the house in its turn, he asked:

"Ned, why do you have that window fenced up in that way, with those slats upon the outside?"

"Oh, that is Marian's room in that corner, and as she walks in her sleep occasionally, we have to fix her windows so she can't get out of them and hurt herself," answered Ned.

"And do you lock her in?" asked Professor Carl, in amazement.

"Yes, sir, when it is not forgotten. But that happens often, and then she may slip out without waking us up. Dear only knows where she goes, but she always comes back. Sometimes mamma wakes up and finds her out of her room, and then she calls me, and I run around the yard and over to the mill till I find her, and lead her back to the house, and up to her room. I don't always wake her up either. Funny, ain't it?" Professor Carl's eyes opening wider in his astonishment.

"Donner und Blitzen, but these ladies are queer creatures," said he in reply to Ned's recital.

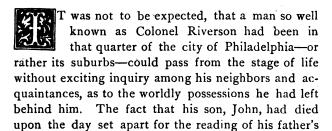
Then Ned pointed out a near cut over the hill, when the Professor, taking him by the hand, said:

"I will be back here in a day or two, and I will come until they will let you take lessons of me. O, don't be afraid! I will manage it some way. Practice your music every day. Now good-bye," shaking his hand heartily.

The last that Ned heard of the jolly old musician, as he climbed the hill, was: "Keno, Keno, you little villain, come here! You shan't murder any more of God's pretty little creatures to-day, you cannibal."

## CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH MR. GRACE MAKES A DISCOVERY.



will, if one there was to read, without being able to tell his dear wife and children anything about his own or his father's affairs, was only calculated to enhance the interest their friends would naturally take in these mournful occurrences. Nor had it taken more than a few months to become convinced that there was no will to be found; and inasmuch as no farm in that vicinity was known to belong to Colonel Riverson at the time of his death, the suspicion that he did not leave a large estate soon became a general one.

It is true that those who discussed the matter were obliged to admit, that his investments might have been changed to another part of the State; in the great coal regions for instance; for Aunt Prudence could not be induced to talk upon the subject with any one outside of the family. This reticence was quite natural to Prudence, and she came honestly enough by it in the opinion of those who had known her father well; and foremost among these was cousin Silas Riverson, who lived in a fine mansion on top of the hill, scarcely a mile from their own snug home along the Wissahickon.

Cousin Silas Riverson had always lived more expensively than Colonel Riverson's family, although it was the general opinion that the latter was well able to buy out the former, and have something left. And owing to this difference in their domestic economy, the two men had never been as close to each other as cousins are expected to be. Silas Riverson was a much younger man, who had married later in life, and now had two daughters, Lucy and Julia, aged twenty-five and twenty-seven years.

These young ladies did not love their cousin Prudence any too well. Probably it was because that lady did not like their inquisitive manners, and gave no sign that she would draw closer to their branch of the great Riverson family, now that both their male protectors had been removed by an inscrutable Provi-But the difficulty of obtaining information as to the financial condition of the family, did not apply to Mr. Grace, who lived in a very nice home upon the Ridge, and practiced his profession—the law—in Walnut street, in the heart of the city. Mr. Grace was a well-known gentleman in this community. had lived here for thirty years, and, of course, knew every one of importance in the neighborhood. parents had entertained peculiar ideas. pious, and as his drawing the first breath of life had been deferred until a late period of the worthy couple's marital life, they had thought proper to name the boy that brought joy to their declining years, 'Saving;' and in this way our legal friend became possessed of the name Saving Grace, Esq.

Mr. Grace could always be relied upon to forward any public movement, that offered a suitable opportunity for bringing himself prominently before the people. From the time that Mr. Grace entered the legal profession, he had believed very firmly in the wisdom and benignancy of the law. And so necessary did he believe these ministers of peace to be to the existence of every well-ordered community, that he had been known to urge upon the authorities of the church to

which he belonged, the importance of having her foreign missionaries first educated in the law.

Those who did not like Mr. Grace were won't to speak of his ostentation; and to call attention to the difference in his character in public, from that which he exhibited in private. With such miserable people Mr. Grace could be very severe. But there are curious and back-biting mortals in every community, and that in which Mr. Grace and the Riverson family lived, was no exception to that general rule. Now the industrious habits of Mr. Grace prompted him to examine the records in the county office, in order to learn the exact financial situation of the Riverson family. Here were two ladies left alone, and he might be able to do them a service.

He soon noted the absence of a will, and also that the daughter and the son's widow were the present owners of all that Colonel Riverson might have died possessed of. This, however, seemed to be but little, judging from the records. He did, however, discover that tract after tract of valuable land had been conveyed by the late Colonel Riverson within a period of ten years previous to his death. And as these sales aggregated a large sum for those days, he was considerably puzzled over it.

"Ah," he said at last "this is interesting, indeed! Here are two parties concerned, and it is quite likely that one will be willing to pay more than the other. In such event, the law can be easily arranged to sustain the most liberal citizen."

One who could be actuated by such lofty ideals of his duty to himself and his fellowman, would not be likely to delay very long the disclosure of his discovery to the parties most interested. Consequently, not many days passed by before Mr. Grace was seen walking down the Ridge in the direction of the Wissahickon, instead of his usual route down Green Lane to the depot, at the foot of the hill, where he took the train for the city nearly every day of his life. sleek and well nourished frame was neatly clothed in accordance with the latest fashion, and his broad and cleanly shaven face presented a good illustration of a man who felt that it was good to have been born and reared under Christian influences, and who felt in a remarkable degree that "his cause was just." though he had reached middle life, his gait was sprightly, and with a cane in his right hand he might easily have been taken for a much younger man. He felt the invigorating influences of the morning walk, and after he turned into the lane leading down to the creek, he paused when he came to the brow of the hill, and looking up and down exclaimed:

"What a pity the old fellow parted with this land."
Mr. Grace soon crossed the old red bridge, courteously greeted Mr. Bean, who was standing in the door
of the mill, then crossed the road, and knocked at the
front door of the Riverson home. Marian had noticed
is approach, and ran at once to inform her mother
1 Aunt Prudence; then she hastened to answer
summons for admission. Greeting Marian, and

complimenting her upon her charming appearance, much to that young lady's confusion, he requested the pleasure of an interview with her mother and her Aunt Prudence.

"I am very sorry to disturb you so early this morning, ladies," said Mr. Grace, with the utmost suavity, "but the fact is, I thought my business with you was important. Do not be alarmed, Mrs. Riverson, I have only good news for you." Ned and Marian were in an adjoining room, and burning with the curiosity be longing to their age, they determined to remain there, unseen by the occupants of the other apartment.

"I merely felt a little aversion to presenting myself before you this morning in my working attire," said Mrs. Riverson, affably.

"As if you were not always presentable, my dear madame," exclaimed Mr. Grace, gallantly.

"Bah!" whispered Ned to Marian, in the other room.

Mrs. Riverson smiled pleasantly, but Prudence Riverson, cool and calculating as usual, with every sense alert, was endeavoring to fathom Mr. Grace's motives. "I suppose you have heard of the death of Expresident Jackson, Miss Prudence?" observed Mr. Grace, with the intention, no doubt, of heightening their interest in his communication, by deferring it as long as possible.

"Why, no sir; I had not heard of that. I suppose his time had come, and I only hope that he was prepared. My sympathies are not with his party, nor yet

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completely with the whigs, as you probably know: I can only look with horror upon a country of freemen, in which human beings are held in bondage, and sold lile cattle. If I were a man, I could only work with and believe in a party that was in favor of the abolition of slavery by some means," said Prudence Riverson, with vigor.

"Your advocacy of that cause so near your heart, Miss Riverson, is quite well known in this vicinity, and I am sure that I honor you for it. I could easily join such a party as you have mentioned. I, too, find it difficult to ally myself with either of the great political parties of the present day. God speed the time when a party may arise that will advocate the cause so near our hearts," replied Mr. Grace, with fervor.

Prudence Riverson was obviously affected by this agreement on the part of Mr. Grace, and her features assumed softer outlines, as she awaited the communication he had to make.

"My dear ladies," resumed Mr. Grace, "as you know, my profession of the law leads me to examine into the titles of a great deal of real estate in this county. By the merest accident I late'y made an important discovery. It is one that discloses a very grave defect in the title, by which Judge Howard holds the Fuller farm that he bought of your father some years ago. I believe he paid eight thousand dollars for it, and yet his title is not good. I found, Miss Prudence, that the deed your father gave, has a very important omission, a legal technicality that

renders it invalid as it now stands; and only the heirs of your father can make Judge Howard's title good to that farm."

"Are you sure that you are not mistaken, Mr. Grace?" asked Prudence Riverson. "It is not like Judge Howard, not to speak of my father, to transact business so loosely. But what do you think we should do about it?" she asked.

"Why, you know, Miss Riverson, that Judge Howard is a wealthy man, and can well afford to pay the penalty of his violation of the law. So when I made this discovery, I thought I might be able to do you a real service by managing the matter in your interest, and perhaps secure for you a couple of thousand dollars, at a trifling expense to you," said Mr. Grace, with the utmost deliberation.

"There is no doubt about the signature to the deed, I suppose, sir, nor that Judge Howard was given possession of the farm by my father during his life," said Prudence, inquiringly.

"By George, Sis, that would help us out like everything, if Grace didn't want more than half of it himself," said Ned to Marian, in the adjoining room.

"All you have stated is quite true, ma'am," said Mr. Grace to Aunt Prudence. "But you see, the laws must be complied with, or there would be no need of them upon our statute books, and this is a penalty justly falling upon Judge Howard."

"Do you think it would be right for the children of Colonel Riverson to demand and accept this double payment from the Judge?" asked Prudence, guardedly.

"Perfectly right and proper, I assure you, Miss Riverson. I am familiar with the law, and this is a proper business procedure," said Mr. Grace, with the confidence of a lawyer who sees that his case is won, while the fee stands out in bold relief.

"Then I can easily say for myself," said Prudence Riverson, looking at her sister-in-law as she spoke, "that I do not need, nor do I desire, any money obtained by an attempt to put disgrace upon the memory of my father. No Riverson would be guilty of that, Mr. Grace! There can be no doubt that Judge Howard paid the money for the farm, and his title will never be disturbed by any act of mine. My sister can speak for herself, she understands her rights."

Mrs. Riverson, having been directly appealed to, felt the necessity of saying something. "I am sure, you are very kind, Mr. Grace, to take such an interest in our family. The money would come very good to us just now—" here Aunt Prudence looked so threateningly toward her that she saw she had made some blunder, and hastened to correct it—" that is, it would not be difficult to use it. But I do not understand these matters so well as Prudence, and I shall support her view of it. But I thank you very much, indeed, Mr. Grace," she said, in conclusion.

"There's dear old mamma slopping over again, Sis. She don't see through the old fox," said Ned in the other room.

"I am really sorry, ladies, to see you both so averse to caring for your temporal interests. I trust you are more concerned for your spiritual welfare; which is so much more important. Perhaps you would like more time to consider the matter?" said Mr. Grace.

"No, sir, I have had an abundance of time. Five minutes is all I need in such a case. Our decision is final, since my sister is so good as to leave it to me," answered Prudence Riverson.

Then there was nothing left for Mr. Grace to do, but to rise and take his leave. As the door closed behind him, Ned began to shake his fist at the departing visitor, but his gentle mother reproved him, for thus reviling a kind Christian gentleman like Mr. Grace. Prudence Riverson only sneered at this admonition, and remarked that, having failed to make a fee out of them, he would now seek Judge Howard, and endeavor to extract a rich one from him.

But Mr. Grace, quite unconscious that he had excited any distrust as to the purity of his motives, walked briskly down the road to the station.

After he had looked over his mail in his Walnut street office, and perceived that nothing demanded his immediate attention but the subject then uppermost in his mind, he hastened to the city office of Judge Howard, the wealthy manufacturer of Manayunk, and quite well known to him. They were soon seated together in the private office of the judge, and not to enter upon the business too suddenly, Mr. Grace started a general conversation.

9.

The judge was a strong partisan democrat, and was always fearful that the citizens of the Northern States would unduly irritate and annoy the citizens of the slave States, thus endangering the Union.

"I am informed that we have abolition sympathizers in Manayunk, Mr. Grace, and also along the Wissahickon, toward Germantown. I can scarcely credit it, sir. It seems too monstrous that any one would engage in such unlawful acts as the encouragement and assistance of runaway slaves," remarked Judge Howard, with a great deal of firmness.

"Like you, Judge Howard, I am loth to believe such stories. There may be a few silly people among us who feel pity for the lot of the slaves, but I cannot believe they would go so far as to forget their obligations to their country and their God. For you know that the Bible reminds servants of their obligations to their masters," said Mr. Grace, earnestly.

"Yes, we shall have to keep our eyes open for the credit of our neighborhood, Mr. Grace; and we must not permit any of the underground railway nonsense. The price of libery is eternal vigilance, you know, and our Southern brethren will hold us to a strict account."

"Of course, I am on the side of law and order, Judge Howard, always, sir. Have you heard any names mentioned?" asked Mr. Grace.

"One, sir, who is said to be the life and soul of the movement, and is quite outspoken in his views. I refer to Doctor Monroe, the disciple of the new medical faith, together with a lot of other nonsense, I fear,

though a kind-hearted man withal. We shall have to warn him, Mr. Grace. It is our duty to speak to him," concluded the Judge.

Then Mr. Grace proceeded to acquaint him with the nature of his business. As he related his story, he was delighted to observe that the judge was shocked to learn of his carelessness in such a transaction. He sent to the bank at once for his deed, and upon examining it, was much astonished to find that the document had the fatal omission, just as Mr. Grace had stated.

The Judge wished to know if the fact was known to the Riverson sisters, and was much annoyed to hear of their knowledge of it, and that they were considering the propriety of bringing suit to re-Mr. Grace further informed the judge that these ladies regarded him and his family highly, and that they were probably open to a compromise, owing, no doubt, to the attentions his son was already paying Miss Marian. The Judge was not unsuspicious of Mr. Grace, but he was really frightened about this affair, and readily agreed to the offer he made him. to arrange the whole matter with the family for one thousand dollars, after which Mr. Grace departed with much inward satisfaction. It was only a few days before he called upon the Riverson's again, to ascertain whether they were willing to sign the necessary papers to make good the title of Judge Howard. As a matter of course, Prudence assented with dignity, although she suspected that Mr. Grace would profit thereby, and promised to accompany him to the nearest Justice of the Peace upon the following day, and sign the proper documents. This was done, and both ladies, accompanied by Marian, were very handsomely treated by Mr. Grace, both as to compliments and refreshments, the latter being much preferred to the former by Marian and her aunt. Mrs. Riverson was delighted with his delicate and considerate attentions. Prudence Riverson was sedate, dignified, and rather crusty, while Marian sought to be a compromise of both.

Mr. Grace received his check for one thousand dollars from Judge Howard, and the following Sabbath surprised the school connected with his church, by making a donation of one hundred dollars to the Library Fund, making his exit from the church very modestly, amidst the congratulations and praises of his fellow laborers in the vineyard. In all such windfalls, Mr. Grace made it a point to give one tenth to the Lord, and for which beautiful adherence to biblical laws he was to be commended.

## CHAPTER VII.

FRESH DISASTER, AND MARIAN'S STRANGE RESOLUTION

S a stone that has become detached from its

bed in the side of a mountain, goes rolling down to the valley with increasing momentum, leaving only desolation and ruin in its track, so does each new demand upon the slender income of a household overwhelm with despair the one who must direct its affairs. Prudence Riv rson was shocked. nay, almost prostrated, by the information that Mr. Bean, the lessee of the mill, had but a few moments before imparted to her. Mr. Bean had just left her, but from anything she had said or done in his presence, he was none the wiser. It was a trivial matter to him that the old water-wheel, one that had turned the complicated machinery of even an old-time grist mill, should at length give way and cry out in the agony of its disturbed industry for repairs. It is true that had Mr. Bean been called upon to replace the old wornout beams and bolts, as a requirement of his lease, he would not have regarded it so lightly. As it was, however, two wealthy ladies would have it to attend to, and that made it an unimportant affair to him. dence had received the information with almost stoical indifference, but as soon as she was alone, she yielded to temptation to afford the luxury of giving way to

her grief, that she often thought would kill her to hide so defiantly. It was only a matter of fifty dollars, he had said; but that amount meant thousands of disappointed hopes. So she bowed her head upon the little mahogany center-table, upon which rested the old family Bible, and groaned aloud. She thought Mr. Bean's steps had scarcely died away—so absorbed was she in the intensity of her feelings—when the door opened, and he stood there again. Poor Mr. Bean, the unconscious bearer of such evil tidings, seemed surprised, and sought to escape at once.

"Pray, excuse me, Miss Riverson, I will see you again. You are not ill, I hope?" he managed to say.

"Never mind me, Mr. Bean. It is nothing more serious than a h—eadache," said she at length, hesitating whether she should say heart or head.

"I only returned to say, ma'am, that some parties are owing me, who can do this work just as well as not, and then I could keep it out of this month's rent. It will be all the same to me, and I will have it well repaired and as cheaply as possible; and this plan will require no money from you at present, while I will be able to collect a debt due me at the same time."

Prudence had now recovered herself. Her tears were dried, and with her old dignified mien, that scorned to all outward appearances the emotions of others, she replied:

"It really makes no difference, Mr. Bean. Your way will do quite as well. I will trust this to you."

That was all she said to him, and if at first he had

entertained a suspicion that her grief had been called forth by the tidings he had brought her, he no longer thought of it, as he crossed the road to the mill. Prudence hastened to make sure that she would not be again disturbed, by fastening the door. Again was her head bowed, but she was now thinking; and very earnestly thinking, how she could best smooth out the household wrinkles, which this unexpected demand upon their scanty income must cause. Mrs. Riverson, with a smile upon her cheerful face, now entered the room.

"What is the matter, Prudence, dear?" she asked with affectionate interest.

"Matter enough, I should say, Mary. The waterwheel is broken, and it will cost us fifty hard dollars this month to fix it. I must relieve my feelings in this way once in a while, or I shall die. I cannot take things as you do. I don't see how you can do it, for the life of me."

"Why, Prudence Riverson, you really astonish me. That is a trifle to take on so about. I thought something terrible had happened. We have enough to eat and are yet clothed, are we not?"

"Yes, and that is just about all you can say for us. Dear me, I wonder we can stand it! Sometimes I really wish I could take things as easily as you do, Mary. But I can't, and that's an end of it."

"Don't give way so, Prudence. We are all strong and healthy. Perhaps we can manage in some way to add to our income," said Mrs. Riverson, softly.

"What is the matter now, Auntie?" asked Marian, as she came tripping into the room; her beautiful rosy face wreathed in smiles, that somehow or other seemed to freeze there as she looked upon her aunt's troubled face. Marian received the news with dismay.

"Yes, dear, you may well think of the new silk dress and the cloak we had planned for you, now that winter is approaching. Then Ned must have a new suit and an overcoat," said Aunt Prudence, bitterly.

"You don't even mention your own or mamma's clothes, that I know you both need so much," said Marian. "I won't have anything spent for me, and I know Ned wouldn't like it, if you could get his mind from his music long enough to see the selfishness of it. I know I need the clothes you mentioned, Auntie; that is, if I continue to go out with the girls of my acquaintance. You know how well they are dressed."

"Yes, Marian," said her mother. I am sure that my old black silk can easily be fixed up once more, and with your help I will be able to do it myself. And that dress we saw in the last number of 'Godey's,' will be just the thing. So, you see I will need nothing new. I have all that any mortal could desire, so long as I have my children near me, and the opportunity to do something for their happiness."

"Which is just like my dear patient mamma," said Marian, as she placed her arms around her mother's neck and kissed her. "But I wish to say," she continued, "that I have decided not to sit down and fold my hands any longer, while my dear mother is working every day from morning till night for me. I must do something to help earn the money we all need so badly."

"But, my daughter," interrupted her mother, "I do not mind what I have to do, my health, thank God, is good, and the work is nothing to me. You can do nothing, or if you could, what would we say about it?"

"Yes, that is it, what could we say about it, except to acknowledge that we who are supposed to be rich, or who ought to be by right, are as poor as church mice? I will die before I will do that! You know very well, Marian, that for more than a hundred years all the Riverson's have been well fixed. No one could point a finger at any of them and call him poor. I want to be buried before the finger of scorn is leveled at me! But you shall have your clothes just the same. I will manage it in some way, if you will only cease your talk about finding employment," said her Aunt Prudence, very earnestly.

"I suppose we might as well have had the money that precious Saving Grace made out of Judge Howard, though I wouldn't pretend to guess how much it was?" said Marian, inquiringly.

"But I don't suppose anything of the kind, Marian Riverson. The Lord knows we need money, but that would have burnt holes in our pockets. Much good it will do him, but it won't hurt Judge Howard, though I am inclined to think he will swear a little, when he learns all about it, that is, if he ever does," said Prudence Riverson.



"You have always been very kind to me, Auntie, and having lived with you all my life, has caused me to look upon you almost as another mother. I should be very sorry to do anything that you would consider a disgrace to you or to our family, although when you refer to any kind of employment in that way, I believe it is a false notion you have. I have, however, made up my mind to do something, and I shall set about it very soon," said Marian, earnestly.

"Will you permit your daughter to do anything so foolish and disgraceful, Mary Riverson?" asked Prudence of her amiable sister-in-law, with much indignation.

"If she is determined to do so, how can I prevent it, Prudence? You know I would not lock her up in her room, nor do I think it would be disgraceful for Marian to work," said Mrs. Riverson in reply.

"She would be locked up in her room pretty quick, if she was my daughter," said Prudence, vehemently.

"Perhaps I can partially satisfy Auntie about this, mamma," said Marian, "at least I will tell you what I have learned and almost decided upon. Nor do I think you will persist in your objections, Auntie," turning to that lady as she spoke, but who only responded by a proud toss of her head, indicative of contempt. "When I was in Manayunk last month, I talked with Doctor Kennedy about finding some employment. He was very much surprised, and asked me at once whether it was necessary. Of course, I said as little about that as possible, but I knew that

he was like one of our family, and would never say anything about it. He was very kind to me and promised to help me in any way that I desired. Then I told him about your objections, Auntie, and that I wished to spare your feelings as much as possible; but that work that would pay me something I must have. Then he looked thoughtful a few moments, and at last asked me to call again in a week or so, when he would see what he could do to help me."

"I wash my hands of all such nonsense this minute, Marian Riverson!" interrupted Aunt Prudence, but Marian continued:

"So the next time I went over, which was only last week, I called upon him again. What a dear kind old doctor he is! He asked me to come into his consultation room at once, that I needed treatment, laughing as he said it. When we were alone, he told me that he had found a situation that would be just the thing for me, in the office of Judge Howard's paper mill."

"Merciful heavens, girl!" exclaimed Aunt Prudence, with hands raised in her astonishment and indignation.

"You know the mill, mamma? It is the last one above the village, between the canal and the river. The employment is writing in connection with the pay rolls of the operatives, and would not require me to work there, for I can bring it home with me, and one visit to the mill each week will answer every purpose. The Doctor said they had too much work in the office for their present force, and not enough to take up another

clerk's entire time. 'I told the Judge and his book-keeper, Mr. Norcross,' said the Doctor, 'that the person I had in view was a maiden lady of middle age, who found it necessary to do something, and that I would soon bring her to see them, if she thought she could do the work.'"

"And are you the middle aged maiden lady mentioned, Marian Riverson? Or was it your Aunt Prudence he had in mind? Merciful sakes alive, what a girl you are!" said Prudence, with suppressed passion.

"Just wait a minute, Auntie, dear, and I will tell you," said Marian, with the utmost good nature.

"No, it was not you he was thinking of. Then the Doctor went on to say, that he had seen old Mrs. Jackson, and told her all about it, wondering whether I could not be disguised whenever I went to the mill, and she had replied, that if we should leave that to her, my own mother would not know me, after she had fixed me up."

"Well, you can bet that your brother Ned would know you," said that young gentleman, who joined the family council at this moment.

"Now, Ned, please do not interrupt me?" said Marian.

"Whew, business, is it?" said Ned.

"Yes it is, and serious business at that," answered his sister. "Then the Doctor took me in his buggy," continued Marian, "and drove me down Main street and up the hill to Mrs. Jackson's, who was as glad as ever to see me. Mr. Jackson was taking in the pen-

nies at the toll-gate, as usual. Mrs. Jackson asked the Doctor to sit down a moment, and then took me into her bedroom. There she put a cap on my head, that held up all my hair, and then made me put on a dress which she had worn a few times many years ago, and a pair of shoes she had. Then she put a handkerchief about my neck, and a pair of spectacles on my nose, and at last a bonnet, a kind of cross between a sun and straw bonnet. Then she declared that I was ready. I wish you could have seen Doctor Kennedy laugh, when we walked into the parlor, and I was introduced to him as Miss Alice Whitby. 'Bless your little heart,' said he, 'your Aunt Prudence would never know who you were, if she were to meet you on the street. That will do, Mrs. Jackson,' he said, with a number of compliments to that lady."

"Now you know what it is I am about to undertake," continued Marian, "and I want a little help from each of you, for I am going to all this trouble about the disguise for your sake, Auntie. I shall then be able to buy my own clothes; for I expect to get five dollars a week for my work. Next week I am to go to the mill in my disguise with the Doctor, and make regular trips thereafter. No one but Doctor Kennedy and Mrs. Jackson will know anything about it, and I am sure the secret will be safe."

"Hurrah for you, Sis! Your a gem, that's what you are!" exclaimed her brother Ned, rapturously.

Mrs. Riverson stepped over to Marian's side and kissed her, then she said: "You are a dear good girl

for wishing to help us, but I don't like this plan over much, my dear. If, however, you are determined about it, I will assist you in every way that I can."

"But you needn't expect any help from me, Miss Pertness," said Aunt Prudence, "for you won't get it. And if it ever comes out, I shall expect you to bear witness that I never consented to it."

"Yes, we will bear cheerful testimony to that," answered Marian.

Just then Ned, who happened to be looking out of the window, uttered an exclamation of surprise, and at once ran out of the door. When Marian looked out, she perceived their friend, Professor Carl, coming up the road, while his dog Keno was already jumping and barking his delight around Ned.

"Aha! Ned, my boy, I am glad to see you. Did you know I was thinking about you ever since our first meeting? Oh, you won't escape from Carl Rother, I can tell you. When I get my clutches upon a genius, upon a genius, mind you," and accompanied by an expressive nod of the head and shrug of the shoulders, "I just hold on."

"I hope you are well to-day, Professor Carl," said Marian, who met him at the door. "We are glad to see you. Please to walk in? Ned, take the Professor's hat and cane."

"I hope you are both enjoying good health, ladies," said Professor Carl, turning to Mrs. Riverson and Aunt Prudence.

"I am always well, for I have no time to be sick,"

answered Mrs. Riverson, smiling. "In a family even as small as ours, there is always something to be done."

"No doubt, ma'am, but I believe you are disposed to work too much. Why should we not have all the enjoyment we possibly can in this world? And while that comes to me in the largest measure from the pursuit of music, perhaps you experience the greatest enjoyment in doing for those you love. That is the way I should read you, Mrs. Riverson," said Professor Carl, cheerily.

"And pray, how would you read me, Professor Carl?" asked Aunt Prudence. "You seem to have a gift in that direction."

Carl Rother, with all his jolly carelessness, could be a keen observer, and just now he was bent upon accomplishing a certain object, and was on the lookout for anything that would aid him. He seized the occasion to endeavor to gain the respect of Prudence, if not her good will.

"I will not deny. Miss Prudence, that I sometimes read people like a book; but you must not forget that some books may be read as we run, while others again are difficult to understand. I may read you correctly in one or two particulars, but that I should in all, I hardly dare to hope," he concluded, bowing gallantly toward her.

"You are quite clever, Professor Carl," she replied, the lines of her features relaxing slightly.

"You are very good to say so, madame," returned

"But I called to ask a great favor at the Professor. your hands this afternoon, ladies," said he turning toward them. "And I believe that you are both too good-natured to refuse me. It is this," resumed the Professor: "The Rev. Mr. Tidrow, of Germantown, in whose church I play the organ, is an amateur musician, and has, with my assistance, organized quite an orchestra, which meets twice a week for practice, and gives him much happiness. I told him of my discovery of this young genius here, and he is extremely anxious that Ned should play in his orchestra. would be a great enjoyment to Ned, and would help me, because he will soon be able to lead it, when I am unable to attend; and the drill and instruction I give them, will help him in his musical studies. We need another violin, and have no such performer on that instrument as Ned Riverson, of that I can assure you! I will also promise to come nearly home with. him upon these evenings, and as the society is made up from our very best families in Germantown, I really think you can hardly refuse to grant the favor which at the same time will give him pleasure."

'Oh, mamma, say that I may go?" pleaded Ned, with his arms about his mother's neck. "That would be grand! You are very kind, Professor Carl," said he, with tears of joy in his eyes.

"The favor will be on your side, my boy, if you will consent. We need you, and want you. Help us? That is our whole case, ladies!"

"Perhaps we had better let the boy do as the Pro-

fessor asks, Prudence? We have never been able to drive this out of his head, and would it not be better to make a fine musician of him, than have him remain an indifferent one?" asked Mrs. Riverson of her sister-in-law.

"It may be that it would, Mary. At least we might try this experiment, so long as he gives no promise of amounting to much in any other direction; though I can't say that I favor it, for I don't," said Prudence.

"I am a thousand times obliged to you, ladies, and I know that Mr. Tidrow will feel under obligations also. I will look after the young man as if he was my son, whenever he is with me. Now, it is time I was going, so I must bid you good-day, ladies. Come to me next Wednesday afternoon, Ned, and take tea with me the first day. Come, Keno, you lazy little fellow," and then Professor Carl bowed his cheerful face out of the house.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## MARIAN BEGINS HER WORK IN THE MILL.



HE day on which Marian had promised to accompany Doctor Kennedy to Howard's paper mill in her disguise, and under the

name of Alice Whitby to ask for employment, came round in due time. It would be useless to deny that Marian was nervous over her curious undertaking. She was blessed with good health. The sole weakness of her organization was a tendency to nervousness that found vent in occasional attacks of somnam-But the care that was usually given to securing the door of her room, which opened only into that of her mother, sufficed to confine her nightly walks within the walls of their own house. Her contemplated visit was freely discussed by all, save Aunt Prudence, who protested to the last, that she would have nothing to do with this wild adventure, so unworthy of a Riverson; that in fact she knew nothing about it, nor did she wish to. Ned wished to drive her over to Mrs. Jackson's, but that plan was abandoned, being considered less secure from discovery, than walking over the hills along an unfrequented path through the woods.

If there was a family in all that section of the country, that Mrs. Jackson revered, it was that of Colonel

Jacob Riverson. Her husband had worked for the Colonel years before, and it was he who secured for Reuben Jackson the position he was then filling. The fact that he was growing old, and was too much stiffened with the rheumatism to do hard work, had moved Colonel Riverson to intercede for him. Their house belonged to the turnpike company, and one could look out of the south windows directly upon the Manayunk pike below, or across the Schuylkill river to the hills and the Reading railroad upon that side. Mrs. Jackson had obtained an enviable reputation as a professional nurse, who possessed a great deal of skill in certain cases. She had performed many worthy offices for Mrs. Mary Riverson, and for many others in that section, and never ceased to take an interest in, and keep in mind, all those whose first aches and pains she had relieved.

Marian started early after dinner, while Ned insisted upon seeing her half way through the woods, and promised to return for her toward evening. Ned left her just back of Judge Howard's beautiful forest grove, in the midst of which his house stood, and then he turned back, while Marian soon after emerged upon the railroad embankment, not far from the Wissahickon station. Crossing the railroad carefully, she was soon in Mrs. Jackson's cosy sitting-room, which looked out upon the pike.

"Why, bless my eyes, here you are sure enough, Marian Riverson. Now you are true grit. Just like your grandfather and your Aunt Prudence. I didn't know whether you'd ever come again on that errand Doctor Kennedy told me about."

"You ought to know me well enough by this time, Aunt Jackson, who have known me all my life, not to be surprised when you find me doing what I agreed to do."

"And you may well speak of knowing me all your life," exclaimed Mrs. Jackson. "Let me see my almanac a minute, and I can tell you all about it in a jiffy," as she opened a drawer of a table, and exposed a goodly pile of those old familiar weather-breeders. Mrs. Jackson had exactly twenty-five of them, and every event of the kind where she had acted as ministering angel had been carefully marked opposite the proper day of the month, and after a name had been given the infant, it had been written upon the margin close by. Some persons might be unable to decipher her hieroglyphics, but when Mrs. Jackson's glasses were properly adjusted upon her nose, and she had a knitting-needle in her right hand to point out the characters, the record could be read with an accuracy that was astonishing. It is true that she possessed quite an advantage from the fact, that no one else being able to read her writing, it was not easy to dispute her accuracy.

"Yes, my dear, here it is, April 17th, 1827, and close to it is marked the dreadful rain storm. How this brings it all back to me. It's a blessed consolation to me now, as I look over these almanacs and think of all them little ones, many of 'em men and

women by this time, as I have helped out in the unconsciousest moments of their lives. And how many of 'em are there marked here do you suppose? But I'll just answer that myself, because you wouldn't know. Well, there's just three hundred of 'em, if there's a dozen."

The door now opened, and Mr. Jackson thrust in his head and shoulders.

"Hannah," said he, "can you give me four fippenny bits for a quarter?"

"Oh, what a bore you are! Of course, I can," and digging an old stocking out of a hole in the hearth, she complied with her husband's request.

"But I must be dressing myself, Mrs. Jackson, and hasten to the village, or I will be late getting home to-night. I would be glad to stay and talk with you, if it were not for that," said Marian.

"Bless your heart, I know it, child; but you must excuse an old woman's tongue when it gets started, especially when she loves you and all your family. Come into the bedroom, dear, and you will be ready in a moment."

It did not take long to transform Marian into a middle-aged spinster, ready and anxious to set out for the village.

"Now just a word, my dear, before you start. Remember how Sydney Ransom looks at you in the drug store when you go in, and perhaps you would do better not to talk too much to him, or with Albert Howard, if he should happen to be in the office.

And before you go, just slip out this side door and walk up and ask the old man how far it is up to the poor house," said Mrs. Jackson, chuckling to herself.

Marian complied with the old lady's request, and Mr. Jackson quite unconcernedly informed her that it was about half a mile up the pike.

Then Mrs. Jackson appeared, and laughed loud and heartily at her husband, while Marian disappeared over the brow of the hill on her way to the lower turnpike. When she reached the village she walked more deliberately, as became a middle aged lady, and soon reached Doctor Kennedy's drug store, which she at once entered. She promptly walked up to Sydney Ransom, and asked after the doctor. That young man replied, in a very common-place way, that he would be in very soon, and gave her a seat. The courtesies of the day were passed without suspicion on Sydney's part, though Marian said as little as possible. Doctor Kennedy soon came in, and greeting her by her new name, escorted her to his buggy, which they entered, and drove up Main street. Doctor was kept busy as they went along, acknowledging the salutations of his friends, besides talking earnestly and laughing frequently with the very plainly dressed lady by his side. They crossed the bridge over the canal, and reaching the strip of land situated between the two streams, drove rapidly past several large mills situated here, until they reached the last, a very large one, devoted to the manufacture of paper and owned by Judge Howard. Doctor Kennedy hitched his horse to the post in front of the office door, and whispering to Marian not to be nervous, he ushered her into the office.

"Mr. Norcross," said the Doctor, "let me introduce you to Miss Alice Whitby, the lady we were talking about."

"Very glad to know you, Miss Whitby. Doctor Kennedy says you can help us a little with our work, and I shall be glad of it," said Mr. Norcross in response.

"How do you do, Albert?" said the doctor, carelessly, to a young gentleman who entered at that moment, and walking across the office, passed out of a door in the rear. The young man thus addressed did not pay any attention to her, for which Marian seemed grateful.

The business was soon arranged, just as Doctor Kennedy had told her it would be, and Marian soon departed with a bundle of little books, from which she was to compile the pay rolls, as well as to see that each book was properly kept. Every Friday afternoon, Mr. Norcross thought, she had better report at the office with her work, and then she would receive her weekly pay, five dollars. A specimen of her writing was given, and in case they wished to see her before the allotted time, the Doctor promised his friend Norcross, to produce her without delay. Anything reasonable, and much that might easily be considered unreasonable, would be assented to by Eli Norcross, when the request came from Doctor Kennedy.

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The business transacted, they re-entered the buggy, and Marian was soon driven down Main street until they were near Mrs. Jackson's house, when the doctor permitted her to alight. Marian ascended the hill by the same circuitous path she had descended it, and found Mrs. Jackson knitting, as usual.

"Dear me," said that lady, is it well with you, darling?"

"Yes, indeed. No one knew me, and I will only have to go once a week, and can do all the writing in my room at home. You'r a dear, good friend, and I will never forget you, Mrs. Jackson," said Marian, gratefully.

"Pshaw! this is nothing. When you get into real trouble and don't know what to do, come to me. And why shouldn't I help them as I've seen draw the first breath of life? At any rate, I'll do it as long as I live. But throw off your things. I like you best as Marian Riverson," said Mrs. Jackson, laughing.

After she had removed her disguise, Marian signified her anxiety to start at once for her home.

"I will get an early tea, my dear, if you will stay and drink a cup with two such old people. Won't you wait?"

"Indeed, Mrs. Jackson, your tea is a great temptation. Then I know all about your beautiful butter, your cottage cheese, and the cheese cakes. They are delicious, and I would like to stay and enjoy them, but I really must go at once. Oh, I forgot all about a question mamma wished me to ask you, Mrs. Jack-

son. Do you still go to market twice a week in the city? Mamma wished to know."

"Bless your heart, yes; bright and early every Wednesday and Saturday mornings."

"Well, then," resumed Marian, "mamma wondered whether you could sell any more butter and schmear-kase than you make yourself?"

"Indeed I could, Hannah Jackson's butter and cheese has a reputation as is worth being proud of But what was it your mother wanted, child?"

"Why don't you see, Mrs. Jackson, mamma thought if you could sell more, that she could just as well as not spare you a few pounds of her's twice a week, and could send it over by Ned the night before. And she said she thought you would know what her butter was and would not be afraid to sell it for your own," said Marian.

"Why for the Lord's sake alive," said Mrs. Jackson, with an expression of astonishment, such as she alone could make, "what ever has come over the Riverson family, my dear? They aren't taking to miserly ways, now that the old Colonel is dead and gone, be they?"

"There is no danger of that, Mrs. Jackson, and the best excuse I can give is that we need all the money we can obtain in an honorable way. A still greater difficulty mamma and I labor under, is the idea that Aunt Prudence entertains, that this is not an honorable way for a Riverson to obtain money, and we can't reason her out of it, either. That is why we try to humor her, by concealing our work. But we know

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we can trust you to keep the secret, Mrs. Jackson," said Marian, inquiringly.

"That you can, indeed. I like to talk well enough, but I can hold my tongue when it is necessary with the closest of 'em. Yes, dear, tell your mother that I can sell all the stuff she can send me, and I would just as soon do it as not. And just say that I would even recommend her butter and cheese before my own, and I'm proud enough of that, I can tell you; for I've been at it now five years, ever since I gave up nursing. Now take a piece of this cheese-cake in your hand, and eat it on the way home. I don't believe you eat any dinner," said the kind-hearted old lady.

"You are more than half right about that, Mrs. Jackson. But good-bye now," as she took the liberal slice of pie, and started 'across the turnpike and up the hill to the railroad track, which she crossed and then disappeared in the woods. Ned met Marian at the appointed rendezvous; for where his sister was concerned, this careles, happy-go-lucky boy could usually be depended upon. "How did it go, Sis?" was his first greeting.

"Well enough, Ned. I think no one would have known me. At least that is what Mr. and Mrs. Jackson said, as well as Dr. Kennedy.

"Did you see Syd Ransom, Sis?"

"Yes, he was in the drug-store when I went in, but he did not know me. He spoke to me politely though, and asked me to take a seat until the Doctor came in," said Marian.

"Of course, he would," said Ned. "I know Sydney Ransom, and he's old reliable himself. Always the same, never ruffled or the least out of plumb."

Then Marian related all her experience to Ned as they walked homeward, and he was enthusiastic in her praise.

"It's really jolly, Sis, to think you will soon have some money of your own to spend just as you please. How I wish I could do something of the kind with music, and perhaps I can some day. I'm mighty glad we ran across Professor Carl. He just knows how a fellow feels about music. I guess he must have traveled the same road."

When they reached home, Marian was a little tired, but her mother was very anxious to hear her story, and asked her to sit down in the sitting-room and relate it to her at once. Aunt Prudence rose abruptly, and muttering something about silly romantic girls, left the room. Then Marian told her mother all that she had learned about her work; how she had been treated; what Doctor Kennedy had said, and at last the opportunity she would now have to send butter and cheese to market through good Mrs. Jackson.

This pleased Mrs. Riverson very much, who remarked with a very sweet and contented smile, that the rough places in their path were being rapidly made smooth.

Thorny indeed must be the path, when this contented spirit could not pluck a few flowers as she passed along. Would there were more such sunny creatures

in the world to bear life's ills, and by their lives and daily self-sacrifices for others, teach the lessons that appeal so directly to the heart of man. They were both glad that Prudence Riverson disdained their confidence, as it enabled them to withold from her the secret of the butter and the cheese. Marian spent the even ing until a late hour, examining the books and papers it would henceforth be her weekly task to write up, and arrange in business-like order, then, full of her day's experience and its excitements, and with her busy brain thinking how she could make use of her unearned money, she retired to her bed.

## CHAPTER IX.

MARIAN MAKES A CURIOUS DISCOVERY.



ARIAN slept later than usual the next morning, and her mother, with the forbearance toward her children that had always

characterized her, asked the rest of the family not to disturb her. But for all these kind intentions of her mother, she appeared at the breakfast table before the rest of the family had finished. Marian's adventures the day before became very naturally the subject of conversation, and as Ned made some hideous statement about her appearance in disguise, Marian began to laugh. At the same moment she reached into her

pocket for her handkerchief. As she did so, she felt something there that made her shiver, then, obeying the next impulse, she proceeded to explore this receptacle. Everyone looked astounded but Ned, who was delighted, as Marian drew forth two beautiful gold pieces.

"Where in the world did these come from?" burst from Marian's lips. "What can this mean, mamma?"

"I don't believe any member of this family is able to play such jokes as that; and no one ought to know it better than you, Marian Riverson," said Aunt Prudence, severely.

"But it is unaccountable to me," persisted Marian. "I never saw or heard of anything like it. Aren't you trying to surprise me with a present, mamma?"

"It really distresses me, my daughter, to know that I must disclaim anything of the kind; for it is just what I should love to do very often, for the pleasure and comfort of my children. I am just as much at sea about it as you are. Are you not seeking to give us a surprise?" asked Mrs. Riverson, in conclusion.

"Why, yes, mamma, it seems that I am; but then I assure you that I had no such intention; and if I had entertained it, I never should have been able to carry it out." answered Marian.

"They are dated 1827, the year in which Marian was born," said Ned, who had been carefully examining the coins for some minutes.

"They ain't so awful bright, but I guess ther'e

good," continued Ned, as he dropped them heavily upon the floor to hear them ring.

"Can't you remember whether you put any money away, thinking you were placing it in the pocket of your own dress, mamma?"

"Why, my child," answered Mrs. Riverson, "I have not seen two such gold pieces since your dear father died. I don't believe Prudence has, either, for our income is spent before we receive it."

"You may well say that," said Prudence, with some accepity, "and I am very sure that I would know where money came from, if I found it in my pocket I am afraid, Marian is trying to deceive us, for the first time in her life. I will say that for her."

"O, Aunt Prudence!" exclaimed Marian, the tears beginning to well up, "how can you say such cruel words to me, just because you are opposed to my earning some money!"

"When young ladies get too smart, and wish to know more than their elders, then it is that all sorts of troubles come upon them. But be sure that your ways will find you out, if you are attempting to deceive us. I don't say that you are, mind you, but when you deliberately made up your mind to do what cannot fail to disgrace our fámily, should it become known, how do we know to what lengths you will go?"

"But you might believe me," said Marian, bitterly, "when I tell you that I know absolutely nothing about it. When I persist in saying that it is just as mysterious to me as it can possibly be to you?"

"Never mind, Sis," said Ned, soothingly, "I'll just throw the dogonned gold out of the window, and stop all this fuss, if that's what's the matter. Don't cry any more, Aunt Prude shan't be cross to you either." And Ned was about to carry out his threat, to really fling the cursed gold away, since his sister was suffering in consequence of its unaccounted presence. Money was no great object to him. But he was promptly restrained by his Aunt Prudence, whose quickened economical conscience did not fail her in this crisis.

"Did I ever see such a good for nothing, careless Riverson as you are, Ned? Don't you dare to throw that money away! How do you know to whom it belongs? Had you not rather think of restoring it to its owner?" said his Aunt Prudence.

"I guess people haven't any business to keep their money in our pockets." retorted Ned.

"It is certainly a very singular occurrence, Prudence," said Mrs. Riverson, "but then I don't see that poor Marian is to blame, nor do I know what should be done about it. I wish Betsey was here now. Her practical common sense would help us, I am sure!"

"Did they give you any money at the mill yesterday?" asked Aunt Prudence. "Did they offer to give you some pay in advance if you happened to need it?"

"No, they did not, Aunt Prudence. Of course, I would not forget that," said Marian.

"But did you say nothing to either Doctor Kennedy or Mrs. Jackson, that might have led them to think we were in need of money? You know either of them would wish to help us if they thought that?" continued Prudence.

"And pray if they had, what could that have to do with finding money in my pocket?" asked Marian.

"Either of them might have placed it there, or rather, Mrs. Jackson could easily have done so, while this dress was in her house, during your absence, and it must have been her; for just as certainly Doctor Kennedy had no opportunity, inasmuch as you did not wear this dress when with him," said Aunt Prudence again.

"Then what would you advise, Prudence?" asked Mrs. Riverson.

"That it be returned to Mrs. Jackson, with our thanks, of course. But at the same time give her to understand, that this branch of the Riverson family is not yet in need of alms," replied that lady, with dignity.

Poor Marian had been prompted by a very healthy appetite when she first seated herself at the table, but when she discovered the suspicions of her aunt, all thoughts of her physical self departed from her. The more she thought of it in the light of her aunt's criticisms, the more reasonable it seemed that Mrs. Jackson, in the kindness of her heart and her devotion to their family, had seen fit to help them in this way. At any rate, it had better be settled at once, and then

she would feel relieved. So she announced her intention of visiting Mrs. Jackson at once, and her determination to probe this curious circumstance to the bottom. No one objected to this expressed purpose of Marian to attempt to clear up the mystery. She would take the path over the hill, and the trip would not require a great deal of time. As soon as Marian had started, Aunt Prudence and Mrs. Riverson busied themselves with their morning duties, although the subject nearest their hearts was that which had been so earnestly discussed at the breakfast table. work was soon finished, principally by the constant efforts of Mrs. Riverson, while Prudence followed her about, commenting upon the events that she had so persistently opposed, concerning both Ned and Marian. Prudence then took up her knitting, and continued to work for several minutes in silence. Every few minutes her brow would contract and then her fingers would lose their cunning, and several stitches would be dropped, which in turn added to her nervousness, until an exclamation would escape her, and after a startled look, she would make another attempt. "What a pity that John had to die so soon after father," exclaimed Prudence, with real emotion. Did you not think he wanted to tell me something, Mary?"

"Yes, I can never think of that day without feeling overwhelmed at my loss. John was such a tender husband and father. I don't think he ever gave any of us a cross word," said his widow, wiping the tears from her eyes.

"Well, we must try and do our duty by these children, Mary, and that is the reason I feel so outraged by Marian's work and Ned's music. I have often heard the preachers in the old Mennonite Church in Germantown say with great impressiveness, that the Lord loved those he chastened. If that is true, Mary, we ought to be loved by Him much more than I fear we deserve," said Prudence.

Just then a wagon approached the house and drew near the fence. A man about fifty years of age was seated on the front seat, his smooth face and the gray locks falling about his ears, together with his mild blue eyes, proclaimed him the friend of every son of Adam. It was Deacon McCallum, who with his two bachelor brothers, like himself, owned and operated a cotton-carding mill, not more than half a mile north of Riverson's in a little ravine between the hills. The mother, an interesting old Scotch lady, kept house for the three brothers.

"Good morning, Mrs. Riverson," said the Deacon, as that lady first looked up. Then, as Prudence did likewise, the Deacon repeated the salutation.

"The Lord is certainly good to us miserable creatures, when he gives us such beautiful weather as this," observed the Deacon.

"Oh, yes, the weather is well enough," answered Prudence, "if everything else only corresponded."

"But don't you think, Miss Riverson, that we should always feel grateful for the mercies that are vouchsafed to us?" asked the good Deacon.

"Well, I don't know, Deacon. Sometimes I can see and believe the promises, and then when all goes wrong, and hardly any light is to be seen, I lose faith, and would about as soon have all wrong, as part."

The Deacon was always ready to speak a word to any doubting soul, and here was an opportunity.

"I hope that nothing has gone wrong, now, but if it has you must lay hold of the promises, Miss Prudence."

"Sometimes I feel as if I could not maintain the fight, and continue that way for a day or two. Our pastor, Mr. Butler, who is also quite a physician in his way, always encourages me by telling me I am sick, and in need of medicine; and in a few days after I see nothing but the promises and forget the doubts."

Mrs. Riverson knew the Deacon was a neighbor who could be trusted, and she told him about the singular occurrence of that morning. As she proceeded, in spite of the signal that Prudence flashed toward her, the eyes of the good Deacon opened wider and wider, as though the days of fairies and Munchausen's had returned to earth.

"It is actually a very curious occurrence. I hardly know what to think of it. If I supposed you really needed it, I should say that the Lord was sending it to you, just as he sent the ravens to Elijah," said the pious man.

"If Mrs. Jackson did not do this, should we use this money, Deacon?" she asked.

"Well, now, let me see," replied that good man, thoughtfully, "I should say that if you refused to do

so, it would be an unwillingness to avail yourselves of the goodness of God. For how else could you come by it? And I should therefore say that it was your duty to do so. Yes, I should not hesitate about that. If I can help you in any way, I hope you will let me know. I pass here so often, day and night, that I always think of you as a part of my own family. I'm a pretty late traveler over these hills many a night. But I must get some shipstuff of Mr. Bean, and will be obliged to go now. Good morning."

Marian walked briskly through the woods, intent upon clearing up the mystery as quickly as possible, and every few minutes she would take the coins out of her pocket and look at them wistfully, as if she wished they belonged to her rightfully, to use as she Ned offered to go with her, but as she knew he wanted to practice the lesson Professor Carl had given him a few days before, and believing also that Mrs. Tackson would feel more free to reveal her share in this, if she was alone, she had not insisted upon his company. Marian was dressed neatly, but about the house, and especially in the morning, she was not used to anything better than calico or muslinde-lane, in such warm weather as then prevailed. she was always tidy, and having a well rounded figure and rosy cheeks, more so than ever this morning from her rapid walking, she presented a picture that any young man might desire to possess. Then her eyes were little tell-tale gossips this morning, that chattered abo t recent weeping, which only increased one's interest in the fair girl. She had now reached the cluster of large chestnut trees adjoining Judge Howard's place on the East, when her progress was suddenly arrested by a cow that stood in the path before her, and persisted in lowering her head in a threatening manner. She thought nothing of this a first, for she had always been familiar with these animals. So she stepped out of the path to make a detour about the obstinate creature, when perceiving this, the cow charged upon her with an evil look. What girl would fail to scream under such circumstances? Scarcely one. And she was no exception. for she screamed loudly and long. And she did something else that was quite sensible. She ran swiftly and dodged behind the large chestnut trees near the path, and the cow could not turn so quickly as the young and agile girl, who, now that she was frightened, possessed the skill of the tiger. As she was running from one tree to another, and calling lustily for help another agent came upon the scene. This was a young gentleman, at least twenty-one years of age, and who was dressed faultlessly, even at this early hour in the morning. The gentleman's face was slightly supercilious, although its outlines were pleasing enough, and his hair and eyes were dark. He came rapidly to her rescue, picking up a large club by the way. Jumping over the fence that defined the boundaries of his father's estate, he gave the unruly creature a blow over the head that stunned her, and made her consent to raise the siege at once,

"Miss Riverson, I cannot tell you how glad I am that I heard your cries, and came at once to your rescue," said he politely.

"I assure you that I am thankful for your presence and assistance, Mr. Howard, but I am very sorry that I disturbed you. I am at a loss to understand what prompted the brute to behave in that way," said Marian, still panting from the violence of her exercise.

"I think it must have been the red ribbon about your neck," Mr. Howard replied. "And it may be there was something of admiration expressed by the creatures conduct. If that was the case, I can hardly find it in my heart to blame her, although I suppose you do not care to be the object of such an outspoken passion."

Marian blushed rosily under the earnest look of admiration the young man bent upon her, but soon found her voice, for she had known Albert Howard many years, and his preference for her society among his young lady friends had not been concealed.

"I can hardly appreciate the attentions I was receiving when you came up," said Marian, laughing. "They were altogether too full of ardor to be agreeable."

"To be frank, though, I must say I bear the beast no ill will for giving me this opportunity to rescue you, and play the hero so effectively. But you are not going? You are too much fatigued. Pray come into the house and rest yourself. There is a gate not far from here," said Albert Howard.

"Oh, I thank you very much, but I am in a great hurry, and as I am now rested, I must be going," said Marian, making an effort to start.

"You must at least allow me to see you safely to the railroad, for the cow might renew the attack the moment I am gone. She must have escaped from our pasture. I will give that rascal, Tony, a lesson he won't forget in a hurry when I see him," with quite a savage gleam in his handsome eyes, as he said this.

"Please do nothing of the kind on my account. It would only distress me," said Marian, timidly.

They were now walking forward together, and it was easy to note the young man's warm admiration for his fair companion. When they reached the railroad he helped her down the steep bank, and asking her to ride with him the following Saturday afternoon, he took his leave, or rather, he allowed her to do so, for he watched her until she had disappeared around the station-house, before he left.

Marian astonished Mrs. Jackson by walking into her kitchen at that hour of the morning.

"Gracious sakes alive, my dear! Has anything happened?" she asked of Marian.

"I was only a little frightened because a cow chased me in the woods," answered Marian, withholding the rest of her adventure, because of Mrs. Jackson's well-known opposition to her receiving the attentions of that young gentleman. She was probably prejudiced.

"I came over so early, Mrs. Jackson, because mamma and auntie wished to know whether you ever saw

this money before?" said Marian, holding up the two gold pieces.

"Why, what on earth ails you, child, that you ask me such enrageous questions? You ain't a bit dazed by your fright, be you?" said she sympathetically, as she approached Marian, and made her sit down.

"I don't believe you've had your breakfast, so just drink a glass of this fresh buttermilk, dear?" handing her a glass, which Marian drank, feeling a trifle gaunt after her walk. It was very clear to Marian that Mrs. Jackson had never seen these coins before, and that lady was very much mystified by the story she related to her. Marian did not stop long after this explanation had been given, and departed, leaving Mrs. Jackson quite puzzled over the occurrence. She stood for some minutes, looking after Marian, her hands upon her hips and her head moving back and forth. She had promised faithfully to say nothing about the matter. Her husband, however, was supposed to share all her secrets, and usually kept them.

When Marian returned, and reported to her mother and Aunt Prudence the result of her walk, they were completely at a loss to account for the strange phenomenon. They did, however, agree that, for the present, Aunt Prudence would take charge of the money, and if, in one week, no rightful owner appeared, Marian should be allowed to spend it as her own. Marian commended this natural conclusion, and felt somewhat relieved thereby, although her desire to penetrate the mystery was as strong as ever.

## CHAPTER X.

## DOCTOR MONROE AND HIS DEFIANCE OF LAW.



HE summer had been succeeded by fall, and this in turn by winter. Ned was visiting his interesting friend and teacher

Germantown more frequently than ever. they that he changed his lescongenial were sons from once a week to thrice, the subterfuge under which this arrangement with the Professor had begun being now very transparent. When the snow came, the family questioned whether Ned could continue his trips to Germantown so often; but the progress he was making, and the combination of instruments in the orchestra that Mr. Tidrow had brought together proved such a strong attraction, that he could not patiently listen to any curtailment of these pleasurable hours. Ned declared that these evenings with his friend and teacher were the happiest of his life, and it was agreed between them that, when winter came, he should remain over night with the Professor whenever bad weather overtook him. Marian continued to make her weekly visit to the mill, and to perform her clerical work to the entire satisfaction of Mr.

Norcross and Albert Howard. It is not likely that any one had ever entertained a suspicion that Miss Alice Whitby was other than she seemed, for which fact Marian was duly thankful. But the approach of winter was also a source of anxiety to Marian as well She had been receiving her wages as to Ned. every week with great regularity, and Mr. Norcross had upon several occasions expressed his gratification to his friend, Doctor Kennedy, for the efficient help he had put in his way. The money was such a help to her in the way of dressing herself, and it enabled her to add so many little comforts to her mother's life, that Marian would not have given up her situation without a She was learning rapidly in this way. school was a large one; that which turns out the largest number of graduates each year, and the lessons of independence and frugality it inculcates, might well be envied by the graduates of the most renowned institution of learning in this country. While Aunt Prudence had not been known to yield one iota of the position she had taken upon this question, it was quite plain to the rest of the family that she had become very well reconciled to it. Mrs. Riverson took the lead only in this affair of Marian's; in all other matters she deferred to Prudence. It is true, she was frequently asked whether she assented to this or that measure by Prudence; but it was soon understood in the family that her acquiescence was always desired and expected, and gentle Mrs. Riverson always met the expectations of her friends.

The family were all in the sitting-room one wild night that winter, while a cheerful fire of logs was blazing in the great open fire-place. Ned sat in one corner playing softly, some of the simple melodies his mother loved to hear.

"What a night it is outside" said Mrs. Riverson, as a more powerful blast of wind slammed the shutter of one of the kitchen windows with great violence. "How the wind sweeps up and down the valley. I hope no one is obliged to be out such a night as this," she continued.

"No doubt some doctor is out visiting some shiftless mortal, who only found out he was sick after night had set in. If I were a doctor, I believe I should be tempted to let some of these people die now and then, if only to make room for more provident ones. I despise those who have no management," said Prudence. The shutter slammed again.

"Ned, dear, please go and fasten that shutter?" asked his mother.

The soft and harmonious strains of Ned's favorite piece continued, and from the boy's position, his eyes toward the ceiling, he was certainly far away from where he sat, oblivious of all about him. Marian pointed her finger toward him in order to draw the attention of her companions to the musician, while she in an ordinary tone repeated her mother's request. But Ned was elsewhere. His thoughts were not of the earth. Only the harmonies of the heavenly choir could interest him at that moment, while the less con-

scious part of his nature continued the strains. Happy fellow! Perhaps after all, he was, though unconsciously, the greatest philosopher.

Marian arose and went to the kitchen to do her mother's bidding, and as she passed Ned she stumbled over his foot, which event aroused him from his musical reverie.

"I really do not know what will become of that boy of yours, Mary," said Aunt Prudence at that moment.

"Why, what is the matter now?" Ned asked, with a tinge of alarm in his voice. The scene was then described to him by his aunt with considerable severity.

"Oh, never mind that, Auntie. That doesn't hurt anything. I only wish I could make you all feel as happy as I was a few minutes ago," he said, earnestly.

"I beg that you will not try, my dear nephew," returned his aunt, sarcastically. "None of the Riversons have ever been luny to my knowledge, and just now one, is quite enough in the family." At that moment a sharp decisive "whoa" was heard in the road near the house, and not long after a knock at the front door reminded them that some one must have been belated in that lonely gorge. It was nine o'clock, and a little trepidation was noticed upon the face of Prudence, as the knock resounded through the house. Ned at once arose to open the door, but his aunt was soon by his side, and first demanded who it was that sought admittance at that unseemly hour. In response, there came four gentle taps, one after another, in rapid suc-

cession upon the door. Prudence Riverson's fears seemed to vanish at once.

"Open the door, Ned, I know who it is now," she said.

As the door opened a young man, with black hair and eyes, and a kindly face that seemed to be pleading with or for some one, entered the room.

"Doctor Monroe," exclaimed Prudence, "what takes you abroad such a night as this? Come to the fire at once, for I see by your nose that you have suffered during your ride," she continued.

Doctor Monroe advanced to the cheerful fire and seated himself, while Prudence introduced him to Mrs. Riverson and Marian, and was about to do the same for Ned, when they both assured her it was unnecessary, as they were already acquainted with each other. In explanation, Ned said he had met the Doctor at Professor Carl's house in Germantown, when Aunt Prudence exclaimed:

"Sure enough, but I had forgotten for the time Carl Rother's interest in the cause."

As Doctor Monroe looked furtively at the other members of the family, Aunt Prudence divining his thoughts, hastened to inform him that concealment from the young people was unnecessary. Thus assured, the doctor proceeded as follows:

"I only received word late this evening, Miss Riverson, from some of our friends twenty miles south of us, that we should prepare to receive a poor woman, who has been separated from her husband and three children for five years, they having previously escaped

to Canada. This poor creature, so the message read, had been caught once, and had been fearfully punished by her master in Virginia; but full of the Godgiven spirit of liberty, she had determined to breathe the free air of Canada, or die in the attempt. miserable citizens of this free and glorious republic, for whose independence your father fought so nobly, Miss Riverson, must hear this kind of talk and hang our heads in shame. But as you know some of us cannot stop there, and this is another opportunity to protest against the cursed abomination, which seeks under the mantle of liberty to hold men, women and children in bondage. Never while I live," continued the Doctor, his form growing more erect, and his speech less distinct, owing to his excitement, "will I refuse to do all that I possibly can, by word or deed, to assist any human being to overthrow the power by which he is held in bondage."

"Poor woman, how she must have suffered," exclaimed Mrs. Riverson, with tears in her eyes. "When will she arrive, Doctor Monroe?"

"To-morrow night she will be brought across the river at Flat Rock, where I will be in waiting for her. From there we will go up Domino Lane to the turnpike, down it to Crease's Lane, crossing the Wissahickon on that bridge, and then striking the township line road, down which we will come to a point due north of this place, where I shall expect to receive the signal from the Deacon, who will be waiting to conduct the poor woman to the cave."

"We will have everything comfortably arranged for her reception by that time. We will see to everything to-morrow morning, Doctor," said Prudence, with great interest. "It will not do to have a fire, of course, but the Deacon can have half a dozen hot bricks there when he goes to meet you, and we will have plenty of warm comforts and good food."

"I have no doubt of that, ladies. I know the care of this poor mother and her trials must touch the heart of any one but a slave driver. The messenger stated that she had been hunted closely, and extra precautions must be taken to avoid her capture. It was suggested that she be allowed to rest a week or so in the first station that it was thought safe for her to do so."

"What worries me the most," continued the Doctor, "is that there is snow on the ground, and tell-tale tracks may be left behind, that may lead the bloodhounds of slavery to her cave. I should have no fears were it not for that."

"We have lived too long among these hills and forests to be defeated by the snow, Doctor Monroe. Bring the poor woman to us, and we will see that she is fed and clothed, and well rested, before you take her farther on her journey. And the human bloodhounds who may be upon her track will not find her, either," said Prudence, roused as she had never been before.

"Then I will return at once and get some sleep, for I shall be out the greater part of to-morrow night.

Fortunately for our cause, it is nothing unusual for a physician to be out at night, and it is not calculated to create suspicion. Good-night, and may God bless you all," said the whole-souled young physician.

As soon as he had left, Aunt Prudence said:

"He is a noble man. Every time I meet him I am impressed with his great desire to be doing something for his fellow men. I don't believe much in his little pill nonsense, but if I ever could take them, he would be the only one who could persuade me into it."

The next morning the family must rise early, for they had much to do. Mrs. Riverson was the first one out of bed. She made the fires, and had the kettle on, before she was able to get Ned down stairs to assist her. Marian had become more considerate for her mother since she had undertaken her clerical work for the mill. In assuming a share of the responsibilities of life, she had been led to see her mother's self-abnegation more forcibly than ever. She was also growing older, and wisdom often comes with increasing years. After breakfast, Ned was dispatched on horseback to see Deacon McCullum, and inform him that business of importance to the cause needed his attention. The good Deacon dropped his work and hastened to Riversons.

Aunt Prudence acquainted him with the interview had with Doctor Monroe the night before, and what was expected of them.

"I am heartily glad of another opportunity to help a suffering mortal in this world. And such a sufferer! God forgive those who do this thing. It is abominable, indeed, as Mr. Butler and I have frequently remarked." "I will make a warm bed of cotton in the cave, and place a supply of everything I think will be needed for a week's siege, and then we must keep away from it," said the Deacon.

Then they agreed upon the articles each would furnish for the poor woman's comfort, and the Deacon returned home to procure his supplies.

He soon returned and started up over the hill with Ned, each carrying a large basket upon his arm. The Deacon instructed Ned to place his feet exactly in his footsteps, saying that he intended to fill them all up with loose snow, after they had finished their work at the cave.

When they arrived on the side of the hill, in the lonely gorge where this secret station of the underground railroad system was situated, they found it in very good condition. It was nearer the top than the base of the hill, and the entrance—which required one to stoop considerably to enter—was entirely concealed by two large cedar trees that grew in front, and whose limbs needed to be brushed aside, before an entrance could be effected. They both entered with their baskets, and found that little snow had penetrated within. They were both familiar with its inner chambers, and could stand upright with a slight inclination of the head. Passing farther into the cavern, they were gratified to find it quite warm and dry.

"We must see if the window is all right," said the

Deacon, as he pressed forward toward a faint ray of light, that was struggling to illuminate the interior of a large room. Here a separation of two shelves of rock had occurred in a manner that prevented any one from the outside, noticing that a large pane of glass for those days-had been rudely inserted, and the cracks stopped up with mud. Below the lower rock no one could approach, and above, the rock projected so far that no one could see the hole and the glass, without lying down and peering cautiously over the edge. Even then it would have been a difficult feat. this window was a fissure in the rocks leading down to the base of the hill, and a stream of the purest water trickled into it from a corresponding cleft in the rock above. This never ceased to flow, summer or winter.

Several trips were made to the cave, and the ladies busied themselves all day, preparing for all possible wants of the unfortunate creature they were to entertain in this novel manner. When they were certain that all had been provided, the Deacon took a large basket, and filling it with snow obtained near the barn, started carefully back in his old tracks to the cave. When he reached it, he carefully filled the first track outside the cave with the snow, to the level of that about it, and did the same to all, as he slowly backed away from the place. A couple of trips, and his task was finished. As he returned to Riverson's house again, he said:

"I have often doubted whether there was any proper

place for craft and cunning, but having discussed the subject with the Rev. Mr. Butler, we both concluded they might be necessary and even worthy instruments in proper hands, and especially when used to overthrow and confuse the machinations of Satan."

## CHAPTER XI.

DOCTOR MONROE'S MIDNIGHT RIDE.

HILE the Riverson's, with the assistance of Deacon McCallum, were attending to the humane work that had been entrusted to them, Doctor Monroe was busily engaged with his pa-His practice was not as yet an extensive one, but he had espoused the new medical doctrines—as he did everything he believed in-with so much ardor, that he had not lacked friends and admirers. votion to every measure designed to promote the welfare of humanity was so pronounced and aggressive, and his connection with his fellow men through the medium of the Masonic, the Odd Fellows and the Temperance fraternities was so extensive, that his influence soon became felt in the community. There was no dissimulation and deceit in his nature. Not enough for his own good in a business way, for he could not refrain from rebuking a wrong, no matter by whom committed. And his manner was so earnest, and his actions so consistent with his expressed convictions, that he was respected, even while he was denounced by his enemies.

Yes, he did have enemies! How could it be otherwise? The man who has no enemies in a commun ty has never exerted a very wide influence. The man who was bold enough to walk into a house and protect the poor slave wife of a drunken brute who was beating her, could not fail to draw upon himself the wrath of the guilty husband. And yet a man so full of good works and love for his brethren, as Doctor Monroe, could not gain the unqualified commendations of his clerical friends. Pastor Smith, to whose church his gentle wife belonged, could not induce the doctor to ally himself with the children of God, because they believed it necessary to obey the divine command to drink wine at the sacramental supper of the church. This caused the doctor's wife, some spiritual apprehensions in regard to her husband's eternal welfare. But as time rolled on, and he gave no sign of changing his views, while his good work abounded more and more, she ceased to worry over this vagary of her husband, believing in her secret heart, no doubt, that in some way, known only to Him, the' good Lord would deliver her husband from the consequences of the violation of so few of his commands. Upon this evening, as the hour hand neared the figure of nine upon the old clock in the corner of the hall, Doctor Monroe arose and told his wife it was nearly

time for him to be going. Tears came into the lady's eyes at once. She knew full well the danger to be incurred, and she was fearful for the safety of her husband. Doctor Monroe busied himself for the next few minutes in examining his pistols. Satisfied that they could be depended upon, and placing his medicine cases in his pockets, he drew on his overcoat, then wrapping his scarf well about his ears, he kissed his tearful young wife and strode forth into the night with a brave heart. He walked rapidly to the livery stable, and his mare was soon harnessed to his sleigh. As he seated himself in it, and tucked the robe around him, Dick, the hostler, turned to him and asked: "Will you be gone long, Doc?"

"Yes," answered the Doctor, "possibly all night. One of those cases you can't say much about in that way, down the pike toward Laurel Hill."

The Doctor drove in that direction several blocks, then he turned northward, and at last turned west, through some of the back streets of Manayunk, and then kept his course steadily toward Flat Rock. The sleighing was excellent, but the Doctor was in no hurry now; sometime must be spent in reaching the rendezvous, and as the weather was quite cold, he preferred to await the time in his sleigh. When the last house in the village had been left behind, the Doctor stopped and removed the string of bells from his horses neck.

"We want as little noise as possible to-night, Betty," said he, as he stroked the neck of the faithful

and fleet-footed animal. Then they moved on slowly again, and at length came to the designated place along the bank of the river. The Doctor knew the ground thoroughly, and he turned down from the highway, and drove his horse close to the edge of the bank. He stood there in the darkness, waiting for the hour to arrive. Walking was quite necessary to keep himself warm, and the mare was also uneasy. The weather had been growing steadily colder for the past week, and fortunately, the ice was quite firm in the river, for the Doctor did not hesitate to satisfy himself upon that point, while waiting for the expected He walked cautiously out upon the ice, and when near the middle of the river perceived a sudden flash of light upon the opposite bank, and then another, still another, and then one final one, making four in all. Ouick as thought, the Doctor placed a tiny whistle to his lips and gave four shrill whistles in response, which echoed and re-echoed between the hills on each bank, until he became fearful that he would arouse some of the neighboring farmers. response was one more flash of light, and then Doctor Monroe moved forward cautiously with pistol in hand. At length he stopped and listened, thinking he heard Before long he heard quite distinctly the voices. following conversation, and then he knew all was right:

"O Lor God, massa, but I'se tired. I'se plum don out!"

Doctor Monroe whistled softly with his lips four times

in succession, and stepped rapidly toward the two figures approaching him upon the ice.

"Who goes there?" rang out sharply, as he drew near.

"A friend," replied the Doctor.

"Thank God!" exclaimed a powerful voice, whose owner soon reached the Doctor, with a middle-aged negro woman by his side, slipping down every few steps and requiring the help of her conductor, and withal, groaning in a manner sufficient to excite the pity of any observer.

"I am truly glad to deliver my charge into your hands, sir," said the stranger—a man of powerful physique, but whose features could not be distinguished owing to the darkness—"for this poor woman is nearly worn out with the cold and constant travel, together with the frequent alarm of a close pursuit. You must give her several days' rest. I do not know your name, and I guess it is best as it is, but I want to grasp your hand before I leave that I may know you if I ever feel your grip again."

They shook hands, and the stranger turned about and walked rapidly back to the south shore, after bidding the colored runaway slave a very cordial farewell, and wishing her many blessings. In a few moments more Doctor Monroe had aided his new charge to the bank where he had left his sleigh, and after placing her in it, and tucking the robes around her as carefully as he would have done for his own mother, he took his seat beside her, telling Betty to get away from there

as lively as she pleased. Betty pricked up her ears, for she knew her master's voice, and seemed to understand his words. On they sped up Domino Lane, with nothing but the white snow on the ground about them, the sky and the stars above, while the poor woman crouching at the good Doctor's feet, kept muttering her thanksgiving to God, and expressing her willingness to kiss the hem of the man's robe who was kind enough to brave his country's unjust laws for her As they emerged from the lane and came. upon the turnpike, the Doctor thought he heard a noise behind them, as of some one in pursuit. poor woman heard it also and began to moan, and wished to get out at once. The Doctor bid her lie still and be quiet, so sharply, that from force of habit she obeyed at once without question, and then he told Betty to clear out as fast as she could. That was enough for the gritty little mare, and away she flew down the pike at a rattling pace. Very soon the noise of pursuit or otherwise was left behind them, but Betty, with head and neck stretched out and her nostrils dilated, was keeping up her swift pace. Then the Doctor's slightly awakened fear subsided, and, looking behind him, he shook his fist at the whole army of slave drivers in the distant South, and exclaimed:

"If you catch me, my word for it, you'll let go fast enough!"

On they traveled, but as they approached the steep hill leading down to the bridge over the Wissahickon

at this point, the pace must needs be slower. And as they entered the old-fashioned covered bridge, the Doctor thought he saw the form of some one outlined upon the white snow beyond, as it hurried to the shelter of the side of the bridge. The lines were passed to his left hand, and one of his pistols firmly grasped in the other. They passed slowly through the bridge, owing to the bare floor over which the sleigh must be dragged. Just as they emerged from the bridge a snort or shout of triumph, so it seemed to the Doctor, who was now thoroughly aroused, was heard and then a dark object rushed toward them.

The poor woman, believing that all her suffering had once more been in vain, dropped back in a dead faint. And it was well for her, or doubtless she would have bounded out of the sleigh, and taken to the woods, only to perish. The Doctor fired promptly at the man who thus sought to impede his way, and the mare went off like a flash, and kept up her pace, until they reached the top of the hill on their way to the township-line road.

"I hope I didn't kill that fellow," said the Doctor to his companion. "But then he won't rush at a man in that way again, so late at night as this."

The poor woman, with the carelessness of her race, recovered from her faint, and regained her courage.

"For God, massa, you stands no triflin. God bress you."

Their further progress was not interrupted, and it was time to be on the lookout for the faithful

Deacon. A large poplar tree had been pointed out as the halting place on the way to the cave from this road, and it soon appeared in sight. At a short distance from the tree the sleigh came to a stand, and the next moment a flash of light appeared behind it, was suddenly obscured, then reappeared. This happened four times in succession. The Doctor's whistle rang out sharply in response, and then he moved boldly up to the tree.

"Are you all right, Doctor?" asked the Deacon.

"Yes, thank God, all has gone well, but we must hurry and get this woman to a safe place. I thought we were pursued as we drove out of Domino Lane down the pike, but Betty gave them no chance," said the Doctor.

"If that is the case, Doctor, you had better ride on at once, so they can follow you, while I take this good woman over the hill to her home of a few days. They will hardly stop here and look for tracks to-night, and at daylight I will fill them all up," said the Deacon, deliberately.

Then, stiff and cold, the poor woman alighted, when Doce or Monroe assured her she would be secreted for several days, where no one could ever find her, and that he would come again some dark night, and drive her on her way farther north. She expressed her gratitude in her peculiar dialect, and then followed the Deacon up the hill, where their forms where soon lost among the trees.

The Doctor drove on, and as the night was well ad-

vanced, and the air quite cold, he slapped first one hand and then the other about his shoulders to warm He reached the Germantown road and then turned toward Riverson's, where he halted and secured his horse. He could see through a chink in one of the shutters that a good fire was still burning upon the hearth, and his benumbed hands and feet made him pause. After covering well his faithful animal, he rapped four times upon the front door, and was at once admitted by Prudence, who had not yet retired, thinking the Doctor would stop on his way home and inform her as to the result of his night ride. She rejoiced with him when she learned that their chargewas already in the cave, and listened eagerly to every incident of the trip, as related to her by the Doctor! After this recital he took his leave, promising to return before many days, and take the fugitive farther on her way. His parting injunction was, that under no circumstances should any of them go near the cave but the Deacon: for he was sure that he would never do so during the day. He soon reached Manayunk, and drove to the stable, from the direction in which he had driven away the night before. Dick was very sleepy, and did not trouble him much with questions, merely saying: "Well, you did make it before daylight, Doc, didn't you?"

In less than an hour the Doctor's weary eyes were closed in sleep, for it took him sometime to relate his experiences to his anxious wife, who had remained awake, awaiting his return with fear and trembling.

It was about four o'clock in the morning when he did fall asleep, and then his wife, tired as she was, could not obtain her slumber, because her tired husband snored so much louder than usual. It was after ten o'clock before the Doctor could be aroused, and by that time several patients were already waiting to consult him. It was almost noon before he appeared on Main street, and then he saw Mr. Grace and Judge Howard moving about in a somewhat mysterious manner, accompanied by a stranger, whose quick, impulsive manner, and broad brimmed hat, proclaimed him a Southerner at first glance.

Instinctively it came to the Doctor, that this man was the master of the poor woman whose cause he had espoused, and his heart filled with anger toward him. But he wished to learn all he could, so he continued to walk about, hoping chance would give him some in formation.

As he stepped into Doctor Kennedy's drug store, he noticed the Judge and the stranger talking to Dick, the hostler. This, of itself was suspicious, but the Doctor only laughed to himself, and felt in his inside pocket, to see if his pistol was still there. Satisfied upon this point, he entered the store and stood conversing with Sydney Ransom near the front door. While he was thus engaged, Judge Howard and his two companions entered, when the Judge at once introduced Doctor Monroe to Colonel Wharton, of Virginia.

The Judge proceeded to say, that Colonel Whee, n

had been engaged for several weeks in tracking a slave woman, who had escaped from his plantation in Virginia, and believed her to be in that part of the country.

"Knowing you to be a law-abiding and peaceful citizen," said the Judge, "we thought you might be willing to aid us in returning this property to our Southern neighbor, if you had by chance obtained any knowledge of the case."

"And all I have to say in response," returned the Doctor, "is, that Colonel Wharton looks too much like a gentleman to be engaged in hunting down a poor woman, who is only seeking to enjoy the fruits of her labor. I have no unfriendly feeling for the gentleman, but I trust he will never again see the woman he is looking for," said the Doctor calmly, but with a dangerous fire in his eyes.

"Why, the man is a damned abolitionist, Judge Howard, and ought to be run out of a lawful community," exclaimed the fiery Southerner.

"My dear Colonel, not so fast, sir," said Judge Howard, deprecatingly. "Do not forget that you are in the North, and that many of our citizens refuse to give their assent to the fugitive slave law, much to my distress and that of all good democrats."

"Yes, but we found that he was out with his sleigh all night, as you know. Perhaps if he is a gentleman, and is willing to obey the laws of his country, he will tell us who he visited last night," said Colonel Wharton, making many gesticulations as he spoke, and almost shaking his fist in the Doctor's face. A number of men had gathered about the door in the meantime, and Doctor Monroe stood cool and defiant, looking the excitable Virginia colonel squarely in the face.

"Yes, sir, I could tell you where I was last night, but then I don't think I will, as I never have been any min's slave, and by the eternal God, sir, I never will! If that will not satisfy you, make the most of it."

Then Doctor Monroe turned to leave the store, but the excitable Colonel Wharton at that moment jumped forward as if to grasp the doctor by the throat.

The Doctor's eye had never left his man. He knew well the effect his words would have upon a slave-owner looking for a piece of runaway property, and the man's fury only delighted him. It was only another opportunity to plunge the dagger of inexorable justice into a slaveholde's heart, while he calmly looked at him as he turned it around several times, and enjoyed his victim's agony.

Before the Colonel had taken his second step, he noticed Doctor Monroe's right eye looking into his very steadily, along the shining barrel of a pistol.

"Another step at your peril, sir," was all he said.

The two men glared at each other a few moments, the colonel looking for some sign that his adversary was weakening; the Doctor coolly debating with himself as to the enormity of the act of killing a man, who stood ready at all times to embroil his hands in the blood of his fellow creature's, and who lived by the sweat of their brows. Then he backed out of

the door, bidding Colonel Wharton good day as he did so, and expressing at the same time his regret that their meeting had terminated in such an inauspicious manner; then placing his pistol in his pocket, he walked rapidly down the street.

Judge Howard was very indignant at the course pursued by Doctor Monroe, although his pride in his town and its people, prompted him to offer an apology for his conduct to Colonel Wharton. He expressed doubts about Doctor Monroe's having any knowledge of this case, and attributed his conduct as much to his intolerance of dictation, as to his hatred of slavery.

Mr. Grace also seconded Judge Howard's efforts, and at the same time suggested, that a thorough search of the country for a mile or two along the Schuylkill and the Wissahickon, might throw some light upon the case.

All this was done upon that and the following day, but nothing came of it, as Doctor Monroe predicted. Several rabid partisans threatened the doctor with violence after hearing the story, but he only retorted, that he was always prepared for any reasonable number of slave-holders or whiskey bloats.

The next evening Deacon McCallum came over to the village to attend his weekly prayer-meeting, a very regular proceeding with him. But those who saw him there, and were moved by his powerful petitions to the throne of grace, did not know that after walking part way up the hill with his pastor, Mr. Butler, he took leave of that gentleman, and hurried by a back street to the residence of Doctor Monroe, to whom he gave an account of the search about his mill and the Riverson's, that very afternoon. He described the chagrin of Colonel Wharton and his rage and disappointment after having tracked a particular horseshoe from the Schuylkill river through Domino Lane, then down the pike to Crease's Lane, and at this bridge over the Wissahickon he had found the dead body of a yearling steer, a circumstance inexplicable to him. Then he lost the tracks on the township-line road.

Doctor Monroe laughed at this recital, for he now knew what had attacked him on his ride that night. But the Deacon had filled all the tracks so deftly, it was impossible to notice them. He had seen the poor woman early that morning when he had filled all the tracks, and she was well and thanking God in a way that did a Christian's soul good, and there was no danger that her hiding-place would be discovered. It was agreed between them that they must wait several days before attempting to take her farther North.

Notwithstanding the rage of Colonel Wharton, and the aid given him by Judge Howard, Mr. Grace, and others, whose veneration for the laws of their country exceeded their detestation of slavery, the slave-mother could not be found by the sharpest officers of the law. And at the end of a week they ceased to pry upon Doctor Monroe's movements, especially after they had been purposely led upon several wild goose chases by that astute gentleman.

So after the snow had disappeared, Doctor Monroe,

having a patient in the good Deacon's mother, which fact had been ostentatiously announced in the papers of the village, it was not at all remarkable that he should go there. This he did one dark night, but did not return until after daylight the next morning. Where he rode that night, has never been fully disclosed, but it seems that Carl Rother had a hand in the expedition, for Ned Riverson often told his Aunt Prudence, how the jolly musician had laughed and chuckled over the way Doctor Monroe and the rest of them, had foiled the human bloodhounds.

And this was only a fractional part of that uninterrupted struggle between Liberty and Freedom, which at last brought on the rebellion, ending with the removal from our escutcheon forever, of the foulest blot that had ever stained it.

## CHAPTER XII.

MARIAN FINDS MORE GOLD, AS WELL AS A LOVER.

INTER had passed away, and summer was once more well advanced, and the topic that caused the most excited discussion was the

action of President Polk, in so promptly accepting the challenge to battle, that our southern neighbor, Mexico, seemed to fling in our faces. The stirring events along the border, where General Taylor had twice beaten the enemy, had aroused the martial spirit of the country. Even in these peaceful suburban villages there were many who were anxious to fight the battles of their country. Ned Riverson, with the enthusiasm of a boy, felt elated over the victorious opening of the campaign, and often expressed a desire to go, especially if he could always fight in the vicinity of a martial band.

Once during the winter Marian found three gold pieces in her pocket in the morning, under much the same circumstances that surrounded that puzzling phenomenon the first time it had been brought to their notice. They could discover no reasonable explanation, and no one to whom the secret had been

entrusted, was able to throw any light upon it. There was no one whom they could legitimately suspect of thus endeavoring to befriend them, and after a few weeks, Marian was again permitted to use the money.

Aunt Prudence worried more than any member of the family over the mystery, though her pride enabled her to keep silent in the presence of strangers.

This last instance had not been forgotten, and Ned had jocosely asked his sister, whether she could not find some more for his benefit, when in less than a week she again produced some coins, this time four in number, amounting to thirty dollars.

Prudence declared it was beyond endurance. While the patient mother expressed herself quite content with all such dealings of Providence, even though her curiosity could not be satisfied. Ned declared that it was a very serious matter, indeed, but quite an interesting one withal. Who was it? How was it done? These were questions that needed an answer before anything could be done, and meantime he would be thankful for any assistance his dear sister was enabled to give him, by virtue of this peculiar gift of hers.

But Marian suffered very much at each recurrence of this peculiar affair, for her Aunt Prudence became more than ever suspicious, that something existed in relation to this, of which they had all been kept in ignorance. Yet her Aunt could hardly doubt the genuine distress depicted on her beautiful face, when she produced the gold upon each occasion. At any rate, Aunt Prudence thought a visit from Aunt Betsey

Claybank would be very agreeable just then, and she was at once sent for.

There was no mistaking the character of the welcome Aunt Betsey received when the stage drew up near the front door. And it was a gratification that brought the smiles to the good hearted lady.

"Now come into the house, Betsey," said Prudence, "we are always glad to see you, and never more so than at this time. How have you been since we saw you last?"

"Oh, law sakes, Prudence, you know I never have time to be sick. Why, just think of it! Suppose you should send for me while I was a layin' in bed sick? Wouldn't that be a pretty state of affairs? And you see I just say, 'I won't be sick, and I never am,'" said that vivacious lady.

"I really do not see how you manage to exert so much will as that, Betsey. For my part, all I can do is to keep on with my work every day the same, for I often feel that I could not muster up will enough to begin again, if I should stop one day," said Mrs. Riverson.

"And I say," resumed Aunt Betsey, "as you all know I've often said before, that you have just as much will as the rest of us. If you had just a little more snap, enough to make others work like you, Mary, it would be a great sight better for them, and certainly much better for you. But I do feel a trifle tired now. Ned, dear, please to give me a drink of that cool spring water."

Ned called to Jerry and disappeared with that frisky cat, soon to return with a pitcher of water.

When they were seated at the table, Aunt Betsey asked the nature of the trouble they were so anxious to talk over with her. The entire story was then related to her. Aunt Prudence began it, but could not be said to have given it entire. There were many important items that she was about to omit, and these Mrs. Riverson would occasionally supply. Nor did Ned and Marian withhold any facts of which they happened to be in possession. Aunt Betsey had never heard of these strange occurrences before, and was much astonished as the recital proceeded. When it was ended, they all waited anxiously to hear her opinion. They expected something that might in some unknown manner lift the vail of mystery surrounding it. They all had so much faith in Aunt Betsey, that great things were always expected of her in any emergency.

Would she fail them now, who never had failed them before?

"Well, I do declare! I never heard such a story as that before!" said Aunt Betsey, deliberately. "And I will say, Prudence, that some people might tell me that story, and all the reply they would get would be an extremely quiet silence, with an upward twitch of my nose. But I have known you all too long, to make you such a reply. By the way, what have you done with the gold you found, Marian?"

"This is the last I found, Aunt Betsey," handing

her the last four coins. "We spent the others, when we found no one claimed it. We can hardly afford to keep money to look at," said Marian.

Aunt Betsey took the coins in her hand and looked at them carefully, then looked up and said:

"The first thing that occurs to me, Prudence, is, that these are genuine gold coins; just what they seem to be. And the next is, that some one put them in Marian's pocket just as sure as you are born. The next question is, who that somebody is? If you and Mary know that you didn't do it, the question is narrowed down to Ned, and Marian herself. But where, in the name of sense, 'hat good-for-nothing careless boy, who never earned a cent in his life, could get money to put in his sister's pocket, I can't see; and I don't believe any one else could have done it, so we may as well pass that idea. And then we have only Marian left," said she, musingly.

Suddenly, Aunt Betsey turned toward Marian and said sharply, "See here, Marian Riverson, I don't believe in witches, nor any nonsense of that sort, and I have known you all your life. Now don't try to pull the wool over my eyes, but just tell me the whole truth. I won't take one whit less than that, from you."

For an answer, the tears appeared at once in Marian's eyes, preventing her for a time from giving voice to her indignant denial of Aunt Betsey's arraignment. Marian's distress was too obvious to be attributed to any deceit, but yet Aunt Betsey, like an

inquisitor General of the olden times, maintained a dignified, but stern attitude.

Upon Marian's part, she could not help feeling greatly outraged. The mystery troubled and vexed her. And in addition to this, she was troubled by the suspicions of her own family, which would crop out every now and then, when they were seeking an explanation; and, of course, only increasing her distress.

"If these mysterious showers of gold continue," thought she, "while I remain in the same ignorance in regard to them, what will become of me? And in spite of all we can do, it will at length become generally known; and then, those who wish to think ill of me, will find this an excellent excuse for doing so."

All these thoughts, and many more, ran through her active mind, and Aunt Betsey, the judge of that circuit for the time being, was doing her best to maintain a judicial frame of mind. At this moment Ned interfered.

"Aunt Betsey, I think you are acting real hateful toward Marian. I do, indeed. And if you don't stop it, I will take revenge on Jerry, who is wondering all the time what is the matter. Come, Marian, never mind what she says. Nobody can blame you for it." Then he approached his sister, and caressingly placed his arm about her. "I am sure," he continued, "that we would be a pretty set of dunces to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. I think we ought to be thankful that we have a Fairy Princess in disguise living with us, and eating at our table. I am sure, I am. And how could I have had that last new suit, if

it hadn't been for Sis's great gift? Can you tell me that, Aunt Betsey Claybank?"

"No, I can't tell you that, but I can tell Ned Riverson to hold his tongue, when he gets too impudent," replied that energetic lady. "And," continued Aunt Betsey, "I have this also to say: When my help is asked for, it is given freely, and without price. But it has to be taken as I choose to give it, and I can't be frightened from the path of duty by a trifling musician, and a boy at that."

"Yes, there it is again," answered Ned. "Just as if any one who loved music better than anything else in the world, must be a booby, and positively no good. You'r all alike about that, and I believe I have just as much right to look upon the rest of the world as the boobies. 'Don't talk to me,' says Professor Carl, 'I think the unmusical world ought to be called the fools.'"

"I did not think you could be so cruel, Aunt Betsey," said Marian at last. "I am just as sorely puzzled over this as you, or any one of the family can be. I am sure, it troubles me enough as it is, without being treated as if I were telling stories."

"Well, dear, if that is the way it stands, it is pretty plain that the Lord doesn't think best to let us know all about it just now. But sometime we will know what it means. Don't think hard of me. I only wanted to probe to the bottom, and spare no one, and now I am satisfied; so don't think I am a cross, ugly old woman, after this," said Aunt Betsey.

Marian smiled as she replied: "I never did think you were cross until now, Aunt Betsey, and I can easily forgive this instance."

Just at that moment the clock struck slowly, and quite solemnly, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Mrs. Riverson, with some alarm, "have we been talking so long? I must clear off the table and wash the dishes," rising as she spoke.

"Now, Marian, you can take a walk with Ned, and I will help your mother with the dishes, as a peace offering," said Aunt Betsey, jumping up and beginning to stir about with the activity of a young woman.

"Thank you ever so much, Auntie, for Ned did want me to go up to the Bower with him this evening. Can you get along without me, mamma?" asked Marian.

"Yes, run along, dear," replied her mother.
"Many deft hands make quick work," and the three ladies were soon seated upon the front porch together.

"Is that son of Judge Howard as attentive to Marian as ever, Prudence?" Aunt Betsey asked of that lady.

"Yes, I think he is. Nor would I be surprised to see him call upon Mary, any day, and ask her consent to their engagement," replied Prudence.

"Do you think she cares for him very much?" asked Betsey, returning to the subject.

"Why, as to that, I can't say, not knowing any more about such sentiment than you, Betsey Clay-

bank." Prudence was about to continue, but her cousin interrupted her.

"Don't forget, Prudence Riverson, that there was a time when you knew as much about that nonsense as any woman."

"But I do know," resumed Prudence, not deigning to notice Betsey's personal allusion, "that he is a young man of good family, who will always be able to take care of her, and who dotes upon her. I have tried to point out to Marian the duty she owes to herself and family, and I think she will never make an alliance that will reflect upon the honor of her family," said Prudence, with dignity.

"What do you think of Albert Howard's attentions, Mary?" asked Betsey of Mrs. Riverson.

"Oh, I do not wish to fret the dear child, Betsey, and so I tell her to think of such matters seriously, and then place her affections at last where her heart prompts her. Marian is a good girl, and Albert Howard is a very pleasant young gentleman, and if she wishes to marry him I shall make no objection, if they are willing to wait a reasonable time," answered Mrs. Riverson.

"What has become of Sydney Ransom?" Aunt Betsey next inquired. "He is my notion of a bright young man, who will make his way in the world. If I were a young girl, no son of Judge Howard could make much of an impression upon me, when Sydney was around," continued Miss Claybank, with emphasis.

"Betsey Claybank, I am surprised at you! To think you would have no more respect for yourself or our family, than to speak of any such relation between Marian Riverson and Sydney Ransom! You must have lost your senses! What! My niece think for a moment in that way, of a man who worked in our mill as a boy, and whose people are a miserable shiftless set! Never! Never! while I live, I hope!" said Prudence, exhibiting considerable excitement.

"I believe he was a good boy when he worked for you, wasn't he?" asked Aunt Betsey coolly, not very much disturbed by the earnestness of Prudence. "And then I didn't say she was likely to think of him in that way. Nor do I suppose that he has ever dared to think of her in that light. But then I do say, Prudence Riverson, that you are not sensible when you carry on in that way, about the bare possibility of such a thing. He will come out all right, and you will be proud of him some day, family or no family! Do get rid of your nonsensical notions about your family. Bah! Every tub must stand on its own foundation, I say, and it's common-sense."

"I won't discuss this question with you any longer, Betsey Claybank," said Prudence, rising from her seat in her anger. "We can never agree about the true dignity of family character, and I will never consent to lower the Riverson flag to ignoble blood!" and Prudence swept majestically out of the room.

Betsey Claybank laughed outright, and conversed sometime longer with Mrs. Riverson, who declared

her good opinion of Sydney Ransom, and how she had always urged him to call upon them, and had sought to make him welcome. But she had noticed with regret, that Prudence always tried to make him understand the social distance between them, and very likely that was the reason he did not come to see them very often.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ALBERT HOWARD'S ATTENTION TO MARIAN.



FEW days later, Albert Howard was seen early one evening driving down the winding road from the top of the hill, and \*Trossing

over the old red bridge, to stop his horse in front of the Riverson homestead. His turnout was an elegant one, and almost any young lady might have been envious of her, to whose pleasure such an equipage was to be devoted, even for one evening. Fast trotters were not so numerous then as now, and a threeminute horse was accounted worthy of any gentleman.

Albert Howard had never taken kindly to any regular employment, much to his father's chagrin, although he made a pretence of performing some clerical work at the paper mill. His inclinations had been to driving horses and attending cricket matches, and much of his time was spent in these pursuits. In society he was the polished young gentleman, whose manner and appearance were all that could be desired. Whether he appeared differently when associated with his boon companions, the sons of some of the other wealthy manufacturers, for which Manayunk was even then noted, was not easy to determine. A few knew that Albert was not altogether obedient to the wishes of his father, who granted him a handsome allowance; while the relations between the father and son were outwardly all that society had a right to expect. Upon Marian Riverson, this wild flower of the Wissahickon, Albert Howard had for several years looked with longing eyes, and nothing his father and mother could say to him tended in the least to cool his ardor. Not that the Judge had any serious objections to his son's matrimonial desires in connection with that young lady. He thought she was a charming girl, and so did his wife; but he was ambitious and grasping, and could not help hoping that his son might marry a lady, who was his equal financially. And while Judge Howard had believed Colonel Riverson to be a wealthy man during his lifetime, he had lately become suspicious that something had gone wrong during the later years of the old gentleman's life, and he now feared that his family had little financial strength. If there was one thing upon which he had set his heart, it was to found a house that would remain for hundreds of years after his death, the synonym of all that was grand, noble, dignified and aristocratic, and possessing immense wealth. But the

Judge knew his son, and he saw that opposition would never succeed in changing an affair of the heart with him. Therefore, so soon as he perceived that he was not to be turned from Marian, he yielded gracefully, and told his son that if he could secure her favor, nothing but a proper period of probation would be interposed between him and the object of his desires.

The Judge was a wise man in many things. He had at least a well-settled purpose in view, and marched forward resolutely to that end, in order to accomplish it, no matter what might come in his way. His strong democratic views caused him to fear an alliance with a family whose sympathies had always been so strongly anti-slavery, and as he thought this matter over, after an interview with his son, when all these points had been discussed, the father chuckled to himself with much inward satisfaction, as he muttered the famous proverb: "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

It always affected Prudence Riverson happily, to see Albert Howard drive up to their door with his sleek horse and shining buggy. Of course, she was not to be benefited in any way, as one might have supposed from the pleasure she derived from such an event; it was altogether through her love for the family name and honor. Such a union would be a consummation of her dearest wishes, and if at times the remembrance of Judge Howard's pro-slavery opinions made her recoil, she easily allayed her fears

with the thought of Albert's lack of interest in such questions, and felt sure of Marian's influence over him in all that pertained to these burning issues; for Prudence felt deeply this blight upon our free institutions. Albert was welcomed very heartily, and soon departed with Marian for an hour's drive. Marian was attired in a very tasty manner, and yet it was not quite in accord with the prevailing styles, for she always had a mode of her own, that her friends said made her look charming at all times. A jaunty little hat sat easily upon her head, and that Albert thought her a beautifully dressed young lady, was obvious enough from the warmth of his greeting. Mrs. Riverson reached the porch just as the young couple were driving away. She had not had time to do her usual evening work and reach the parlor before. But her smile was just as sweet as usual, as she wished them a pleasant ride, and asked Albert not to keep Marian out very late.

"I don't believe your mother ever spoke a cross word to you, Marian," said Albert, as he gave his horse the reins.

"You are right," replied Marian. "As for that, I doubt whether she ever spoke cross to any one."

"I should think it would be a pleasant experience for her children, and all about her," returned Albert. "I am sure that I enjoy no such pleasure, for my mother gives it to me pretty heavy at times, while the governor makes it exceedingly warm for me every day or two."

"It may be that you deserve it," said Marian,

laughing. "You do not know how much depends in my mother's case upon the sterling virtues of her children."

"I should be willing to admit it in your case," said Albert, with an ardent look at Marian, "but I should not like to say as much about that careless, musical brother of yours. I should think he would make any mother cross."

"Dear Ned. Why, you don't know the dear, happy, careless fellow," said Marian, affectionately, "or you never could speak of him in that way."

"I guess I don't know him very well, for he doesn't seem to take to me for some reason or other. I am sorry for it; deuced sorry, Marian; but then I would rather be on good terms with his sister. That suits me much better," said Albert.

Marian blushed, and looked across the creek, along the bank of which they were riding westward.

"See," said Marian, pointing to a high, shelving rock, which jutted out into the stream, and from whose summit, to the deep, dark water at its base must have been at least a hundred feet. "What a terrible place that would be for a runaway horse and carriage to approach from the road. Just think of the awful fall they would have into the water below."

"Have you then never heard the story connected with that rock, Marian?" asked Albert.

"Indeed, I have not. Pray, let me hear it."

"My father said he heard the story from a nephew of the principal actor in the tragedy," continued Albert. "An old farmer, by the name of Michael Derwent, lived not far from these rocky hills, and was peacefully farming his land, with the aid of his halfdozen able-bodied sons, when the revolutionary war The old man was hale and vigorous, and quite pronounced in his support of the cause of the But there lived in the same neighborhood another farmer, named Isaac Warden, who had taken an orphan girl to raise, named Ellen. This old man was as ardent in the support of his Majesty, King George, as Michael Derwent was in opposing him. Now George Derwent, one of Michael's sons, loved Ellen, and was, in consequence, often at old Warden's house. It was never fully known by what means old man Warden succeeded in corrupting Georg Derwent, and turning him against his father and brothers in that conflict, but it was always supposed to have been through his love for Ellen, and to promises Warden must have made George in connection with her. However it was, George suddenly left his home, giving his father and brother no intimation of his future They, however, suspected that he had joined the British army. He had promised Ellen to meet her beneath that large cedar tree, part way up the hill, just around that bend of the creek-pointing back from where they were about a hundred yards-you know it well, I think, for its branches well conceal one from the road below."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Oh yes, I know that tree," said Marian.

<sup>&</sup>quot;He told her," continued Albert, "that he would

surely meet her there in exactly one year from the time he left her, and would then claim her as his bride. The year passed away. The battle of Germantown had been fought and lost, and yet old Michael Derwent and his sons were always ready to rally at a moments notice, to help repel any little band of British that might come into these lonely wilds for plunder.

"Upon this night the old man and his sons had received word, and were promptly on hand behind a projecting rock on the side of the road, not far below the tree I have mentioned.

"Just as they heard the tramp of horses' feet a quarter of a mile below, they saw the form of a girl under the tree above them, and wondered what she could be doing there. But they had not long to wait. On came the troop of British horse, decked out gaily in their scarlet uniforms; and the moment they came in front of this rock. Michael and his sons opened a deadly fire upon them, and then the girl's presence was forgotten. Several of the soldiers bit the dust, and also one of Derwent's sons. At last one of the troopers, bolder than the rest, charged upon the rock and succeeded in dragging old Michael out of his hiding place, when he dispatched him with his knife. The Derwent boys disappeared, and Ellen soon appeared upon the scene, and gave George Derwent—who appeared to be the leader of the party—a hearty welcome back to his But a few moments after, he looked with the aid of his lantern, upon the form of the man he had just slain, and was horror-stricken to find it was the body of his own father. About this time old Isaac Warden came up, and George Derwent cursed him to his face for the evil influence he had brought upon him, and then embracing Ellen very tenderly, and bidding her goodbye, he stripped the scarlet uniform from his body, and trampled upon it with terrible fury; then, mounting his horse, he spurred him to his highest speed as he approached this part of the road, gesticulating his farewell to Ellen. The poor horse refused at first to go toward the fatal cliff, but renewed spurring decided him, and with a wild unearthly shout, the horse and rider went plunging down into the water below."

"Poor Ellen! Poor George! What sad times they must have had in those days," said Marian, "I can remember my grandfather—now your story recalls it—mentioning the name of Michael Derwent as one who was always ready to fight for the cause in this vicinity."

"I did not think we would have such a solemn ride when we started," said Albert, "but this kind of a gait will at least soon drive away your melancholy. Don't let the loves and hates of those old duffers—now long since mingled with the earth from which they sprang—interfere with your happiness. I am almost vexed to think I told you the story."

"Indeed, I am not," answered Marian, "And I car hardly see how you can talk in that way about those

<sup>\*</sup> This story is given in Lippard's Legends of the Revolution. Philadelphia, 1847.

men and their struggles. To me there is something so sacred about it all, that I can never speak lightly about them."

"And we have been so busy talking, we have scarcely noticed the road we were following." said Albert. "We have passed the Devil's Pool in the gathering darkness, and the horse has led us up the hill through Wise's lane, until we are near the turnpike, down which I suppose we had better drive toward home."

"Yes," answered Marian, "Mamma did not wish me to remain out late."

So they drove rapidly down the pike toward the city. The cool night air, as it fanned their cheeks and added to their color, aided by the rapid motion of the blooded horse, excited all the pleasurable emotions so apt to be aroused, when two young and congenial spirits of the opposite sex are associated together under these circumstances. At each of the taverns along this highway in those days, were to be seen nearly every evening, a goodly number of the neighboring farmer's seated upon the long porch in front, each prepared to have his say upon the events of interest in that locality, and occasionally upon the part of the boldest, would even discuss those of more national importance. As they drew up in front of Highly's tavern to obtain a drink of Philadelphia mead-which they kept nice and cool in stone bottles—a dozen or more men lowered their chairs to the floor from their previously tilted attitude, possibly in deference to Marian's presence, and

ceased their discussion of General Scott's Campaign in Mexico; that they might miss no portion of the conversation between the innkeeper and the young couple who had driven up.

But who was the lady? was the question they wished to solve, and which would be sure to be asked them by their good wives when they reached home. And when Albert left his horse in charge of the hostler, and went into the bar-room to obtain a cigar, after asking Marian's permissiou to smoke by her side, each occupant of a chair arose and passed into the room behind him; and while a few said, "good-evening, Albert," the rest looked solemnly and curiously on.

From the tavern to Marian's house the ride was, if anything, more agreeable than that which preceded it. Their conversation became more personal, and more applicable to each other. Albert was coaxing Marian for an answer to a question he had propounded to her, and which he considered of great importance to him. And Marian did not seem disposed to comply with The exact nature of the his very reasonable request. question could only be a matter of conjecture to those who have never been placed in a similar position. Those who have had the pleasure of such an experience scarcely need enlightenment at the hands of any one. There are some things in the world that one does not need to be informed about. Like the instincts of the animal creation, they simply appear without our knowing why, or from whence they come.

Marian Riverson, while feeling flattered and happy, perhaps because of the attention she was receiving from this pleasant young man, who had so much wealth at his disposal, still felt a coyness natural to her sex, in deciding a matter of this moment without some reflection. Nor was it until she heard the horses' steps resounding throughout the length of the old red bridge, so near her home, that Marian condescended to inform Albert that she probably would not refuse to answer his question some time in the future, provided her mother and aunt offered no serious objections. And whether it was a proper deduction to make, that said answer would be a favorable one or not, certain it is, that Albert Howard was much elated, as he bid Marian good-bye that night.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE PROPOSAL. PRUDENCE TELLS MARIAN HER STORY.

HE next day Mrs. Riverson noticed that Marian was uneasy and distracted. It is true that she had her writing for Mr. Norcross to do, which she always did in her room, but she would come down-stairs every half hour or so and watch her mother at her work, with such an anxious expression, that her Aunt Prudence could not refrain from commenting upon it, and did so, with her usual fréedom. Then Marian would blush and run up-stairs again, remarking, as she did so, that her task was larger than usual that week, and she must hurry if she would finish it in time. Mrs. Riverson noticed her daughter's manner, but in the goodness of her heart she did not attribute her actions to the ride of the evening before; but the lynx-eyes of Prudence served to open those of her sister-in-law. She it was who made such a remark to her companions, Aunt Betsey and Mrs. Riverson, after one of Marian's trips down-stairs. The fond mother opened her eyes with astonishment, but she merely remarked that Marian would tell her all about it very soon, if that was the Aust Prudence appeared to be pleased,

while Aunt Betsey seemed disposed to resent such a dispensation-of Providence, so far as it might have to do with Marian's future happiness, but she merely expressed the hope that Marian might be happy, no matter who she married; and as she usually spoke freely, if at all, she would only say that such a match was not wholly satisfactory to her. This remark, though made in her most conciliatory manner, served to arouse Aunt Prudence, and their rather warm discussion of the subject continued, until Mrs. Riverson rang the bell for dinner.

They seated themselves at the table in response to Mrs. Riverson's bell, while Aunt Betsev declared with emphasis, that they didn't deserve any dinner, because they had thoughtlessly allowed Mary to get the meal alone. Mrs. Riverson's motherly sympathy with her daughter enabled her, after the hint Prudence had given her, to interpret properly her daughter's peculiar actions that morning. She then felt confident that Marian wished to confide in her, and was only awaiting an opportunity to do so. Therefore, as soon as she had cleared the table, she passed up-stairs to her own room, where she tarried a few minutes before entering Marian's chamber, where that young lady was busily at work. At the moment of her mother's entrance, however, she had paused, pen in hand, and was looking fixedly at something in the forest upon the hill-side, to be seen from her window. Riverson closed the door behind her, and then seated herself at Marian's side. As she did so, she placed her hand upon her shoulder in a caressing and said:

"You are not making much progress with your work to-day, my dear, and I thought you might wish to speak to me alone, so I came to you where we would not be interrupted."

"Yes, I did want to speak to you this morning, mamma," Marian replied, blushing. "I wanted to tell you," she continued, hiding her face completely upon her mother's breast, "that Albert asked me last night, whether I would not some day become his wife."

"And what did my daughter say about it herself? She is the one most interested, I should think," said her mother.

"Oh, I told him I would leave it to you, and perhaps," hesitatingly, "Aunt Prudence."

"Do you love Albert Howard, Marian?" asked her mother, seriously.

"Why, I like him better than any young man whose society I have enjoyed, and I am sure he is very polite and attentive, and thinks ever so much of me! Of that I feel certain," said Marian, though with a little uncertainty that seemed to belie her words.

"We are very sure that we do not want to lose you, Marian. Even your brother Ned would hardly know how to get along without you. I must at least ask that you will not think of marriage for some years yet," said her mother.

"No, I do not wish to be married for some time, mamma. We only want to know that we have your

sanction to our engagement. Albert does not want to wait long, but then he must do as I say about that," said Marian, with firmness.

"Well, dear, we can see no reasonable objection to Albert Howard, so long as you love him, and wish to marry him; although your brother does not like him very well, I fear. But dear Ned is generous, and I do not think he will say anything to hurt your feelings, once he is aware of your engagement. I will see Albert this evening when he comes, and accept him, if it is your wish, which I doubt not is the case. Now I would like to talk with Prudence a little about it, and it is possible she would like to see you alone, and congratulate you. If so, I will send her to you. Good-bye, my dear," said her mother sweetly, kissing her daughter fondly before she left.

"I don't see how I could ever leave such a dear, good mother as you are," said Marian, affectionately, the tears coming into her eyes.

Mrs. Riverson descended to the sitting-room, where she found Aunt Betsey and Prudence with their afternoon sewing, they having been engaged in discussing with animation the suspected matrimonial prospects of Marian Riverson. It was plain that both were anxious to be placed in possession of the information which she, the mother, could give them. Mrs. Riverson seated herself near the others, and told them all that had been revealed to her by Marian. Prudence could not conceal her satisfaction. But Aunt Betsey's nose twitched a trifle higher than the position it usually oc-

cupied in space, when she heard the news; and as actions often speak louder than words, it was not difficult to understand the views of Betsey Claybank about this prospective alliance. In fact, she had expressed herself before. But when Betsey knew the odds were against her, she usually reserved the fire of her artillery, until some supreme moment or crisis of the battle should demand imperatively that she should do or die. For this reason she said nothing more just then. In fact it was unnecessary, as both her companions already knew her views.

"I think I will go and see Marian, and thank her for the effect this action of hers will have upon the Riverson family," said Prudence. "I have often been afraid that Marian might wish to marry beneath her, and this action of her's relieves me very much. She is in her room, I suppose."

Prudence then left the room to carry out her intention, and at the same moment Aunt Betsey broke forth:

"Stuff and nonsense, about the family honor and all that sort of thing! I'm sick and tired of hearing Prudence Riverson talk about her family pride! She's got entirely too much of it! It has blasted her life, as you very well know, Mary, and I don't like to see Marian start out in life upon the same road. Pshaw! what's money worth without brains and common sense? Mind what I say to you, Mary," continued the energetic and irate lady, "nothing good will come of an alliance of this kind. But thank fortune, it hasn't taken place yet, that's one good point. So I

guess I won't say any more about it, and will let Prudence enjoy the prospect while she can."

"Aren't you a little unjust to the Howard family, Betsey?" asked Mrs. Riverson, in her kindest manner.

"No, indeed I ain't. I know exactly what I'm talking about, when I am on the subject of Judge Howard and his tribe. I don't like him, and it is strange that Prudence can swallow his pro-slavery views. he'd like to hold slaves right here in Philadelphia, if he could. And in fact, he does hold his wife and boy pretty much as they hold slaves down South. only proves how crazy Prudence is over the family honor, or she never would be happy over a union of Marian Riverson with Judge Howard's son, no matter how polite and wealthy he was. But I reckon nothing can be done now, if the girl likes him. Don't let them think about getting married for several years, and I shall be willing to look on and say mighty little. Then it will come out all right in the end. I'm going to find that Dominick hen's nest, or my name's not Betsey Claybank," she concluded, as she arose in response to the chuckling challenge of the hen, who, having come down the hill and around the corner of the house, was cackling with great volubility.

"Marian, my dear," said her Aunt Prudence, with a voice much softer than usual with her as she entered the room, "I wish to thank you for being so sensible in placing your affections, where a due consideration for the honor and dignity of our family should have prompted you, to bestow them. So many girls marry beneath them, and thus lower the positions their families have held in the world, that such conduct as yours deserves the warmest praise."

Here her aunt kissed her affectionately, as she seated herself in the vacant chair by her side. Then noticing that Marian was engaged upon her work for the mill, she continued:

"The only thing you ever did that displeased me very much, Marian, was when you insisted upon working for wages. I did hope, no member of our family would come to that! And since this engagement is, or soon will be a fact, it alarms me more than ever; for fear your disguise will be penetrated, and the fact come in some way to the Howard family. They would never forgive us for such an insult to them, and I could scarcely blame them either."

"Why, Aunt, I do not consider it the least disgrace, and yet, of course, I am anxious to keep it as securely concealed as we have done thus far."

"Child, you cannot be expected to sympathize with or to understand the feelings of those who have succeeded in establishing a position in the world; and why they do not wish to ally themselves with those, who are compelled to labor for their daily bread." As her Aunt Prudence ceased speaking, her head was thrown back, her voice was stronger and more masculine, as though all the pride of blood and ancestry that came down to her from the days of William Penn, was struggling to impress its lesson of blood upon those about her, who were living in the middle of the nine-

teenth century. Then, in a few moments, with a softer voice, Aunt Prudence resumed: "You have pleased me so much in this matter, Marian, that I am almost persuaded to tell you the story of my life. Why, in fact, I never married."

"Oh, Auntie, that would please me ever so much. Do tell me," pleaded Marian earnestly.

"I believe I will, Marian, in order that you may see what we can do for the right if we will, and that you may possibly profit by my experience."

Marian dropped her pen, and turned toward her aunt, with a look of the greatest interest.

"I think I was only eighteen years old when I first became acquainted with Richard," said her Aunt Prudence.

"He was perhaps twenty-one or two years of age, always dressed neatly the moment his work was over, was very polite, and one would have taken him for the son of some wealthy man, so graceful and refined were his actions in the presence of ladies.

"My father became acquainted with him, and brought him to our house, in order to obtain his services in dressing the stones in the mill; for he was very skillful in that work. We had but few neighbors living near us in those days, and we had to board any one like him, whose work only kept him with us a few days at a time. When Richard was at the mill to work, I always enjoyed the evenings we spent together. During the summer, especially after he had been coming there a couple of years, we would often take a

walk along the creek, or sit and talk under some of the beautiful trees along its banks. And so this went on for several years longer, the whole family thinking more of this young man each year; he was so pleasant and reliable, and commanded such high wages for those days. My father and mother never said anything to me about Richard's attentions to me, and I scarcely thought of him as a lover.

"I enjoyed his society. He could talk so well, and had read so much; and was always bringing me some book of travels to read, which he would describe in such a captivating manner, as to make me anxious to read it. As a natural result, I found myself becoming more and more interested in him.

"Just up the creek near your bower, while we were gathering flowers there one evening in the early part of June, he told me how he had learned to love me, and urged me to tell him that I returned his love, and would be his wife. He told me how he had been working to help his father and mother, and at the same time save money to further the one great ambition of his earlier life, that of being able to travel to distant lands. He went on to say that nothing had ever made him waver in that purpose of his life, but his love for me. He pressed me cruelly for an answer that evening, but while I gave him to understand that I did love him, I did not say so then, only promising to give him my answer in a day or two, and consenting that he might see whether he would be acceptable to my father. With this he was happy enough, and the

next evening my father talked to me, and told me how much he thought of Richard, and that I should do as I thought best about it.

"It was only a couple of months after it became generally known that we were engaged, that cousin Silas Riverson was passing our house, and entered into conversation with me. Having obtained his opportunity, he made me very indignant and shocked me greatly, by asking what I meant by intending to marry into such a low family as that of Richard's? Of course, I gave him as good as he sent, and he left in a hurry, but not before he had informed me where Richard's father and mother lived,down in Moyamensing,-and that his father was a common butcher; that if I wanted to see what I was doing, I should go there quietly, and see the old lady stuffing sausages for the Philadelphia market. cried all that night, but remembered the address and went into the city the next day. I did as Silas Riverson suggested, though he doesn't know it to this day, and found them just such a couple as he had described. I did not stop to investigate farther, or to make their acquaintance. The sight of the old lady's robust form, as she made her sausages, together with their conversation, decided me, and I returned home with my mind fully made up, and my love for Richard crushed to death in my heart, as I then supposed.

"It was only a week or ten days later, when Richard came again, and being naturally astonished at my altered behavior, he soon sought a private interview,

and was overwhelmed, when I told him I would never marry him. Poor fellow! I can see him now as he pleaded with me, to know the cause of my change; and when at last he wrung it from me, that it was because of his family, their low social position and so forth, how he did straighten up, as he turned to me and said:

"'Prudence, good-bye, then. I have never loved before, and I doubt whether I can ever love again; but so help me God, I will never slight or desert the worthy couple to whom I owe my existence. I will go away now. I can never come here again, and may God bless you, Prudence, if you have nearly broken my heart.'

"Marian, I have never seen or heard from Richard since. My father was quite angry with me, notwithstanding he had told me to do as I pleased, and said he didn't care what his parents were. He knew men well enough, he said, to know that Richard was one of the best God had ever made, and ever after, he did everything he could to keep me from marrying any one else, though the truth is, I have never had the least inclination to do so, from that day to this."

Aunt Prudence was much affected before the conclusion of her story. When she had finished, she leaned her head forward a few minutes, and when she raised it again, Marian could see tears in her eyes. The old love was not so dead as she imagined, or would have others believe. Marian soon broke the silence.

"Aunt Prudence, I don't " you could ever do

what you did. I could never treat a man I loved in that way. I did not think you could be so cruel, and I believe you love him yet," said Marian, impulsively.

"My dear, you are young now," replied her aunt, "but you will know later on that I took the wisest course. No matter how much I loved him—and I am now willing to admit, after all these years, that I did—life with him would have been unpleasant, and his family perhaps the cause of constant quarrels. I am thankful now that I possessed sufficient firmness and the good judgment to recognize this fact, and to be guided by it. No, Marian, I did right. And this experience of mine makes me grateful to you, for having given your heart to one so worthy of you, by all those family and social positions, we must take into consideration, if we have the least particle of self-respect."

"Oh, Auntie! I would be the most miserable woman alive, if I should ever do what you did. I cannot look upon it as you do. But I thank you for your story, and your approval of my choice," said Marian, sadly.

That evening Albert Howard called at the house, and after greeting Marian warmly, asked to see her mother. The interview was granted, but not with that lady alone. Mrs. Riverson felt her usual dependence upon her strong-minded sister-in-law, even in a matter of this delicate character, for both ladies stood in the responsible position of parents to the young and guileless Miss Marian, upon such an oc-

casion as this. Everything was quite satisfactory, and when Albert returned to his home, he informed his mother that he was the accepted lover of Marian Riverson, and that the sole point of disagreement with her guardians was that of the date of marriage, both of them insisting that she was quite young, and at least a couple of years must elapse, before their marriage could take place. But he thought himself very fortunate in having no more serious difference with her Aunt Prudence, and thought he could easily overlook this, so long as he was to enjoy her society during the period of probation.

## CHAPTER XV.

DOCTOR MONROE INTERVIEWS MR. LORGAN.

OCTOR MONROE'S large heart embraced so many of the human family and its woes, that the demands upon his time by his in-

creasing practice, and the numerous societies to which he belonged, often caused his devoted and goodnatured wife to protest. Yet, when she would seriously question the necessity of his joining another society, that he declared would largely extend his usefulness to his fellow men, the husband usually carried his point; for how could she admit that her husband—a

non-professing Christian—was more desirous of benefiting humanity than one, who was a disciple of the meek and lowly Nazarene? So, with the secret meetings of the Abolitionists, whose acknowledged leader in that section Doctor Monroe undoubtedly was, the meetings of the Sons of Temperance—next to slavery the most important question of the day to Doctor Monroe—with the regular meetings of the Masonic and Odd Fellows societies, thrown in parenthetically, the Doctor was a very busy man.

One day, in the fall of that year, Doctor Monroe had business in the city, and he took occasion to call upon Mr. Lorgan, and in a few minutes was conducted to that gentleman's private office. Mr. Lorgan took the Doctor's hand and said:

"I am very glad to see you this morning, Doctor Monroe. I was thinking of you yesterday, and wondered whether you had any late news from our friends along the border."

"Yes, sir," replied the Doctor, "hardly a week passes that I do not receive some word or some request, to place this or that in a certain locality for the cause, and I usually attend to such matters myself. I am proud to say, that I have assisted many poor souls to flee from the wrath that is already upon them in the land of their birth, and I expect to continue the good work until slavery has been wiped out."

"I am glad you located in Manayunk when you did, Doctor," said Mr. Lorgan, earnestly. "Of all the friends to our cause, with whom I come in con-

tact, no one is so enthusiastic an advocate as you. They are very bitter in Baltimore, and frequently assert that we are all abolitionists in the North-twothirds of them on the slv. Well," continued the speaker, laughing slightly, "I don't wonder so much when I think of my own case, and to be frank with you, Doctor, I am not altogether satisfied with myself. But you can see how it is with a banking house such as ours. We cannot afford to offend good customers unnecessarily, and yet we have our individual opinions, and like to act upon them. So we say as little as possible upon the subject, though you will never find me taking the pro-slavery side in a discussion. do not talk a great deal, and it keeps one out of many difficulties. How much money do you think vou can use now. Doctor? You know I do not withhold my hand in that respect, and it is only fair that I should be liberal when others take all the risk."

"I am satisfied with the part you take, Mr. Lorgan, and none of us have the least inclination to complain. I have the will, and a little of the necessary courage, thank God, and you have the money, and a heart that prompts you to use it in such a noble cause, and I think we are only equal," continued Doctor Monroe. At this moment a clerk rapped at the door, and when he entered, Mr. Lorgan inquired:

" What is it. William?"

"If you please, sir, Mr. Thurston wishes to know if you have fully made up your mind to invest 'Trust' Number Nine,' in Philadelphia, Germantown and

Norristown securities?" asked the clerk, with a respectful manner.

"Tell him I have, William, and that he should take the proper steps to carry out that decision."

"That relates to a very singular affair, Doctor," continued Mr. Lorgan, turning to his friend, the moment the clerk had closed the door. "I have thought so much about it and puzzled myself to such an extent, that I came near forgetting myself to-day, by telling you the story which would have been a violation of a solemn obligation to secrecy. I must be more careful in the future! We meet with many curious incidents and people in this world, Dr. Monroe," he said, musingly, in conclusion.

"Indeed, you may well say that, sir."

"Have you met Mr. Lester, Doctor?" asked Mr. Lorgan.

"I met him a couple of times last winter, and have received many letters in cipher from him. But our meetings have always been so hurried and in the dead of night, that we never had time for the interchange of social courtesies; a pressure of the hand and a God bless you, has, I am sorry to say, been the extent of our intercourse at present."

"He is a peculiar man," resumed Mr. Lorgan, "and has had a checkered career. While he is rich now, he had a struggle with poverty in his youth, and has been a wanderer. But although wealth has come to him, a sadness seems to have taken possession of him, that almost amounts to melancholy, suggestive of some dis

appointment that time is unable to efface; and beneath it all an intense hatred of slavery. I know you would enjoy his society, Doctor, and he would be the better for your's."

Doctor Monroe knew, what too few people in the world do for their own comfort and that of others, and that is, to leave a business man after you have transacted your business. And as Mr. Lorgan handed him a roll of bills to be used at his discretion, he shook that worthy banker's hand in his hearty manner, and left the bank.

Not many days later, when the ladies of the Riverson household were enjoying the glories of an early autumn afternoon, they were surprised to see a strange gentleman driving slowly up the road from the direction of the city. It was obviously his intention to stop, and in a few moments he had alighted and was approaching the front porch, where the ladies, Aunt Betsey included, were sitting.

"Upon my soul, I believe it is that Mr. Lorgan I met in the stage when I came here more than a year ago," said Aunt Betsey in an undertone to the other members of the group. By this time Mr. Lorgan, for he it was, had reached the front gate and, bowing politely, he asked, "if Mrs. and Miss Riverson lived there?"

"Yes, sir, they do, and they have the same visitor they had a year ago, whose acquaintance you made in the stage," said Aunt Betsey, approaching him and extending her hand. "I am very glad to see you, sir, and so are my cousins, Mrs. Riverson and Miss Riverson, Mr. Lorgan," presenting them very properly, while Mr. Lorgan bowed.

"And I must not forget Miss Marian Riverson, Mr. Lorgan, a young lady I have always held up as a pattern, and who has uncommon good sense. Please to be seated, sir," giving him a chair as she spoke.

"I am much gratified to meet you again, Miss Claybank. I remember distinctly the interesting conversation we had with each other that day. You will probably remember that I promised to call during that visit of yours, and I intended to do so, but something always seemed to prevent me from fulfilling my promise. It is fortunate that you should be here again. I am afraid I should not become acquainted with the family as readily in your absence," said Mr. Lorgan.

"We are not very stiff or conventional in this quiet valley, Mr. Lorgan," said Mrs. Riverson, pleasantly. "Nevertheless we welcome you to our house. Our cousin, Miss Claybank, enjoyed her ride with you in the stage very much.'

"I hope she did, ma'am," responded Mr. Lorgan, gallantly. "But I am afraid I was not very entertaining that day, owing to a business matter that was occupying my thoughts just then, and which I had been up in the country to investigate, all to no purpose. I should like to make any amends in my power to-day for my abstracted manner upon that occasion."

"I should think no apologies were due Betsey," said

Prudence Riverson, addressing Mr. Lorgan, "from the way she wearied you with the history of our family."

"On the contrary, I was very much interested in what she told me out of the fullness of her heart, and that interest has increased, rather than diminished with time. I am a very busy man, Miss Riverson, or I should have made your acquaintance long ago, but I hope to ride this way quite often hereafter, and will surely call, if it be not presumption on my part," said Mr. Lorgan.

"We shall always be pleased to see you," said Prudence, then she continued, "are you acquainted with any of our neighbors, Mr. Lorgan?"

"I have met some of them in a business way; Judge Howard, Silas Riverson, and Mr. Grace, for instance. But I am better acquainted with Doctor Monroe, of Manayunk, and Deacon McCallum, your near neighbor, and that happy musician of Germantown, known as Professor Carl," said Mr. Lorgan.

"If you are so well acquainted with these men, Mr. Lorgan, I think I can easily divine the bond of friendship between you, and if I am correct, it is one in which I can heartily join you. Our whole family is in complete sympathy with such sentiments, and my father entertained them before us, so you can talk freely with us, Mr. Lorgan," said Prudence, with animation.

"I am glad to hear you express yourself in that way, Miss Riverson. I understand fully what you mean, though very few of my business friends know the extent of my interest in the cause, I can easily see you have at heart. It would hardly be prudent to have it generally known that any member of our house entertained such views, and for that reason I am deprived of the privilege of that active and outspoken support, I should like so well to give it. I do a little, however, in another way, and I often deprecate my silence when conversing with my friends, Doctor Monroe and Mr. Lester, both very ardent in this cause," said Mr. Lorgan.

Prudence Riverson at this moment became strangely affected. Her face flushed and she trembled visibly, breathing with some difficulty, but before any measures could be taken for her relief, she appeared to be herself again,

Mr. Lorgan was alarmed, and said:

"I hope you have no serious disease of which this attack is a symptom, Miss Riverson?"

"Indeed, I think not, sir," replied Prudence. "I never was affected in that way before, and I think it is only a passing indispostion."

"You may all believe what you please about it," said Auut Betsey, energetically, "but it is my firm belief that it was a fit of indigestion, caused by that cabbage you eat for dinner, Prudence."

Marian laughed outright, while her Aunt Prudence looked severely at Aunt Betsey.

"Oh, sir, I assure you, it was nothing serious. Pray, do not think of it again," said Prudence, turning to the much alarmed gentleman. "It is very sad to think that your father and your husband," turning to Mrs. Riverson, as he spoke, "should have been taken from you so suddenly, and at such a short interval. Was your father a vigorous old gentleman previous to his death?" Mr. Lorgan inquired of Prudence.

"Yes sir, he was. So true was it, that none of us knew anything about his affairs; he attended to everything himself, and the consequence has been that we,"—here Prudence, who was the speaker, began to hesitate, remembering her usual reticence about the family affairs, but continued, "have been unable to fully understand his business or his wishes."

This was at least a mild way of stating the financial perplexities of the family, and no doubt Mr. Lorgan was able to penetrate the subterfuge, thanks to the frank volubility of Aunt Betsey upon the day of their first meeting.

"As your father lived to such an advanced age, it is a wonder he did not have some peculiarities. They are so common among the aged. I see it quite often in my business. They are usually afraid that society is about to crumble, and it worries them to think there will be no one to take proper care of the property they have accumulated," remarked Mr. Lorgan, musingly.

"Why, Mr. Lorgan, I should think you had known my father, you have described him so accurately, especially after the crisis of 1837," said Prudence.

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Lorgan, inquiringly, and

with great interest. "I may have known your father, but not by name. While I have been talking with you, I have experienced a singular impression that I must have met him; but these freaks of the mind cannot be trusted implicitly, Miss Riverson. I wish I could see a portrait of your father. Then I should know at once. You certainly have something of the kind as a remembrance?" addressing all of the ladies present.

"We are very sorry to confess that we have nothing of that nature. I often urged him to have his portrait painted, but he always deferred it," said Prudence, regretfully.

By the time Prudence had concluded, Mr. Lorgan seemed very absent of mind. "The very same, I do believe. But no portrait, and what can I do?" he muttered so loudly, that Betsey thought it very strange indeed. Soon after obtaining a drink of water, the delicious coolness of which he could not refrain from commenting upon, and drinking part of a glass of buttermilk, which Mrs. Riverson kindly urged upon him, Mr. Lorgan arose to take his leave. took that opportunity to say to Mrs. Riverson and Prudence, that he should be glad to continue the acquaintance thus formed, with their permission, and to bring his wife with him the next time he came. Both ladies assured him of a hearty welcome. Before the sound of his horses receding footsteps had died away, Prudence Riverson had concluded that Mr. Lorgan's acquaintance and friendship might prove quite advantageous to their family. As there were no dissenting voices, the conclusion she had formulated was allowed to go upon the record as the unanimous sense of the house.

## CHAPTER XVI.

DEACON MCCALLUM ENCOUNTERS A GHOST.

HE good Deacon McCallum continued to labor every day in his mill with the industry and thrift of his Scottish ancestry, and with an implicit confidence that God would give such increase as he and his deserved. It needed an occasion of importance to take him from his work upon a week day. But when a neighbor was in distress, he was not the man to refuse his help, even though a day's work in his own behalf was lost. He simply trusted, with child-like confidence, that all is for the best. Deacon's religious views were very plain and simple. He did not believe that salvation came through good works, or by reason of them. Although his church was nearly three miles from his home, and his path thereto lay through the most lonely and gloomy of rocky hills and dells, the Deacon was rarely absent from his accustomed seat—the fourth pew from the front row, in the center block, and to the right of his

In rain or in sunshine, when the thermometer was among the nineties, or when it was below zero, by sunlight or starlight, he was faithful to his service; and could you not discern his face and form, you had not long to wait ere you would realize his presence by the peculiar and soul stirring blasts that he blew with the aid of his large silk bandanna, which, when not in use, was always carried in the crown of his hat. served the Deacon's purposes by way of recreation, were the weekly visits to his pastor, Mr. Butler and his family, which he paid with great regularity, after the Tuesday evening prayer meeting, and after the Sabbath evening sermon. At such times he accompanied his pastor home, and these visits came to be regarded by both of them as one of the perquisites of the After the visits there came the lonely deaconly office. walk at midnight down the Ridge Road, and into the lane leading down to the vale of the Wissahickon, then across the covered bridge, and another half mile to his home. How often one of his pastor's children would ask him if he was not afraid, and how sincere was his reply, that God could watch over one at night, just as easily as by day.

But to the youngsters who, though children of a minister, were worldly enough to think of robbers, spooks and other uncanny things delighting in darkness, his answer was always insufficient and unconvincing.

There was no reason, however, to doubt its import to the good Deacon. He had heard considerable talk

in his day about ghosts, but they were in his opinion—if any existed—always designed in the providence of God for some wise purpose concerning only the individual who saw them; and for this reason, together with the fact, that he had never met any himself, he felt incompetent to pass an opinion.

One night in June, about a year after the visit of Mr. Lorgan to the Riverson's, the Deacon attended his prayer meeting as usual. He walked up the hill with Mr. Butler, and seated himself upon the front porch with all the enthusiasm of the apprentice boy taking his vacation. There were so many things to talk about of mutual interest to both, that time did not hang heavy on his hands, as was occasionally the case with the pastor.

The night was warm and oppressive. The Deacon had noticed for more than an hour the flashings of lightning in the southeast, but being interested in his conversation, while his friend slept peacefully by his side, he dismissed it as heat lightning, that does not always presage a storm. But at length the long distant rumble of thunder aroused both the sleeper and the talker, and looking about them they found it lacked but half an hour to midnight.

Then the Deacon bestirred himself, for he could not be induced to remain. His mother and brothers would expect him. So he took the umbrella they urged upon him, and bidding his friend and pastor good-night, he left the house. With a faint hope that he could reach home before the storm burst upon

him, Deacon McCallum at once put his sturdy legs upon their mettle, and started across the commons a few rods beyond Mr. Butler's house, with such an improvement upon his daily walk, that it more nearly resembled the trot of a horse. Louder and nearer pealed the thunder. As he passed the Baptist church, the tops of the long poplar trees surrounding it whistled in such a weird and human way, as they bent before the storm, that instinctively the Deacon paused a moment, and with a look of expectancy upon his face, uttered the exclamation, "Here am I, Lord," and then once more walked rapidly forward. Now the rain came down in torrents. There were no scattering drops at first coming gradually, then closer together, and making at last a respectable rain. Almost before the umbrella could be hoisted, the Deacon was quite But he marched steadily on, the great drops of perspiration mingling with the rain drops upon his rotund face, trickled into his eyes and almost blinded In such a wind it was no use to think of using the bandanna; so it was not undertaken. But now he was approaching a haven of refuge, for he had entered the lane leading down to the gorge through which the water of the Wissabickon flows, and when he reached the bridge he would find shelter.

As he came to the brow of the hill, a beautiful spectacle burst upon his dimmed vision with every flash of lightning. Even this matter-of-fact man paused, wet and bedraggled as he was, and gazed upon it with awe. Far up toward Whitemarsh—the source of the

stream—could be seen with each flash of lightning innumerable bold rocks, some with precipitous sides, and others having all manner of fanciful outlines. The strong illumination cast shadows, momentary though they were, that gave this romantic valley a charm hitherto unrecognized by the good Deacon. Involuntarily there escaped from his lips, "How wonderful are thy works, O Lord!" and then he descended the hill rapidly, while the rain came down with undiminished violence.

Nearly soaked to the skin by the rain in spite of his efforts to hold the umbrella over him, and perspiring at every pore, while unable to use his bandanna, the Deacon entered the covered bridge. The rain for a time at least was over. Not so the grand lightning display, which continued at longer intervals. He took several steps before he looked up, and when he did, he was unable to proceed, but seemed rooted to the plank floor of the old wooden structure. of the creek, swollen by the immense rainfall, was now rushing beneath the bridge with the roar of a mad torrent. And he could hear that it was within a few feet of the bridge. But he knew what sudden freshets came down these river courses, and it was not the dread of such an event that arrested his footsteps. There, in the opposite entrance of the bridge, he saw a human form all dressed in white, very plainly outlined with every flash of lightning, and walking slowly up and down. He had never seen a ghost, but these characters had been described by so many before and during his time, he could not fail to recognize one when he had the opportunity. Was it perhaps the presiding genius of the storm only then subsiding? was one of the Deacon's first thoughts. For there it was-there is no sex in ghosts-walking up and down just within the entrance with thoughtful mien, debating in its mind, perhaps, what additional evil it should bring upon those who were the objects of its malevolence. The Deacon's first instinct was of self-preservation, so his long swinging stride was suddenly arrested, and the next moment, seeing it in full possession of the other end of the bridge, he hastened to the side of the structure, and sought to hide his burly form behind the huge timbers forming its walls. The umbrella had fallen to the floor where his steps had been first arrested, and the bandanna was now in constant His hair, too, seemed to have inspired courage from the raging elements about him, for it stood erect, as though in defiance of any harm that evil spirits might seek to bring upon him. But was this an evil spirit? which now barred his pathway to his home, on this tempestuous night. If he remembered rightly, his pastor had discussed with him more than once the subject of good and evil spirits. must wait for an overt act before assigning this one to the latter class. His tread was heavy, and he feared his presence had been recognized when he first looked up, and saw the terrible object, knowing he had taken several steps into the bridge before he had seen his unearthly companion.

He scarcely removed his eyes from that terrible, solemn figure, walking back and forth across the bridge, using its arms as though issuing it's commands to the elements about it.

Time was passing, and the Deacon was very warm, and yet the obstacle to his passage still remained. He could not think of retreating and walking up the creek to the next bridge, that would be two great a task on such a night as that, and yet he did entertain it for a fleeting moment. But he soon decided that a soldier of the cross should not flee like the wicked, and he would not, come what might.

He now watched with eagerness the uncanny object, and once it turned and walked toward him, and in that momentary view by the aid of the lightning, he saw the face of an angel: Then there could be nothing to fear, for no emissary from Satan's kingdom could look like that:

"And if that is the angel of death come to summon me to my eternal home, I will welcome her. Perhaps I should speak to her?" he muttered, as his courage began to revive with these conclusions. The sight was fascinating to the good man, and his latest thought being about dissolution, his thoughts reverted to the efficacy of prayer. And only that night in the prayer-meeting, he had announced his willingness to obey the summons of the messenger with cheerfulness. Yes, God be praised, he was ready when the Master calleth, and he sank quietly upon his knees in prayer, expecting the summons every moment.

But after several minutes had elapsed, and it came not, he looked up, and lo! the celestial visitor had departed. He did not go upon his way at once, however. Perhaps the angel was yet near at hand, and only wished to tempt him? He was ready, but was it right to be in such haste to meet death, and a blissful eternity?

He would wait longer. At last nothing more could be discovered, and he thought of his earthly home, his mother, and his brothers, all of whom would be worried about him, and then he cautiously ventured from his place of concealment, exclaiming:

"How long, O Lord, how long?" and strode carefully forward, peering into every nook of the bridge as he proceeded. He soon emerged in safety upon the other bank, hearing nothing but the mad rush of the seething waters of the creek beneath him. His fears for the safety of his own mill soon came uppermost in his mind, as he could see nothing more of the ghost, angel, or whatever it may have be n. He went along at a swinging pace now, and soon passed the Riverson homestead, where all seemed quiet, and soon after reached his home, much disturbed in mind over the startling occurrences of the night, but without thought of informing his brothers. Finding his mill safe, he went to bed, dreaming fitfully until daylight, of the angel he had seen within the bridge.

The next day the Deacon attended to his work as usual, but it was plain that he was worried about something, and as soon as he had finished his supper, he

started for the Ridge, and his pastor's home, who manifested no little surprise to see him again so soon. Then he related all the occurrences of the previous night to his friend, Mr. Butler, and that gentleman, knowing how the good Deacon was occasionally affected, at once concluded that the worthy man had been frightened by the storm, and had imagined most of the exciting events he had so minutely described to him. These conclusions he kept to himself, but he advised the Deacon to say nothing about the matter, as he would then give no one occasion to laugh at him, and possibly subsequent events might throw some light upon it.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

#### THE DISASTER TO THE MILL.

HE Riverson's slept soundly throughout the storm, much to their astonishment after they had witnessed the evidence of its power the next morning. But their visitor and relative, Aunt Betsey, had been awakened by its violence, and found

it difficult to fall asleep again, although she was not frightened.

When Mrs. Riverson came down-stairs, she found Mr. Bean waiting to see her, and he was looking unusually serious. "Mrs. Riverson," he began, "I have

very bad news for you this morning. I dislike very much to tell you."

"Why, what can you mean, Mr. Bean?" said the lady her almost unvarying equanimity slightly shaken by his manner.

"I mean, ma'am, that the terrible storm we had last night has nearly ruined the dam, and has very seriously damaged the mill," replied Mr. Bean.

"But it can be repaired, can it not, Mr. Bean?" inquired Mrs. Riverson, with a countenance very puzzling to Mr Bean.

At this moment Marian came down-stairs, in company with her Aunt Prudence, and while Mr. Bean was telling these two about the disaster that had come upon them, Aunt Betsey joined them. Before he had completed his recital of the injuries to the mill and the dam, Prudence exclaimed:

"For God's sake, Mr. Bean, don't tell me the whole of it now! I can't bear it, and I will not go over it at present. It is enough to know that a great disaster has come upon us, and I do not know why."

With this, Prudence left the group standing about Mr. Bean, and went into the parlor, where she dropped upon the sofa with a look of utter despair.

"Well, as I live," said Aunt Betsey, "I never did see any harder storm among these hills, and the creek is still raging over everything, though Mr. Bean says it is running down rapidly now. I am sorry for you Mary, that I am," turning to Mrs. Riverson and Marian. "I see it will almost kill Prudence, from the way she takes it. But I must know the worst, so I will go over with Mr. Bean, and see if we can ascertain what it will cost to repair the damage," and having thus delivered her opinion, she crossed the road in that gentleman's company.

Marian ran up stairs to tell Ned the terrible story, and in a few minutes the boy came tearing down, and ran at once to the mill, where Aunt Betsey and Mr. Bean were engaged in viewing the wreck, and seeking to learn its extent.

Marian now began to weep, while her patient mother tried in vain to comfort her. Just when everything was going on so nicely with them, there must come such a trial as this! She knew too well their lack of money to meet such an emergency, and it made her feel desperate. What would her work and sacrifice amount to in the face of such a loss? It seemed almost useless to continue to work for the pittance that had previously given her so many additional comforts.

"Never mind, my dear," said her mother soothingly, "perhaps things are not quite so bad as Mr. Bean thinks, and in any event, some way out of our difficulty will be found, I have no doubt."

"Yes, but that is what you always say, Mamma, no matter how bad things are," said Marian. I am sure I can't see how we are going to live, if the mill is injured so it will not run.

"You must learn to be patient Marian, and trust your heavenly Father in all that he does for us, whether

we like it or not. It will not do to be rebellious," answered her mother.

"And if here isn't some more of that miserable gold!" exclaimed Marian, drawing several coins out of her pocket, ready to burst out crying again.

"Why, my dear, it is astonishing, I know, but do you not see that it should be some consolation in the midst of such trials, that gold comes to us from some mysterious source?" said her mother gently, but chidingly.

"But, I am quite sure that I cannot appreciate it, mamma," answered Marian. "The amount does not help us much, and then there is the uncertainty about it, and the suspicions some entertain about me, of what they do not know, but which makes me angry with myself and all about me. To think, I should find this again at this time, when there is so much to worry us! What can it mean? and shall we never know anything about it? Do take the money, mamma, and don't let me see it again. I hate it, and almost hate myself, for the inexplicable mystery surrounding me," concluded Marian.

Her mother tried to soothe her, and had in some measure succeeded, by the time Aunt Betsey and Ned returned from the mill to make their report.

"By George, Sis," said Ned, running up to Marian, "Mr. Bean didn't paint it a bit too strong. It was a bad night's work for us. The only consolation I can derive from it is, that we must be a mighty good family, according to the way the Lord chastens us."

"Ned, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Don't make fun of such a terribly serious affair. I am ready to cry now, in my disappointment and grief," said Marian.

"Don't do that, I beg of you, Sis, it's no manner of use. There's the busted dam, and the mill-race, and part of the wall next the creek; the deuce knows how much money it will take to fix it, and we haven't a cent. Whew!" said he deprecatingly. "What's the use? I can't do anything, and I'm going to take to the woods with my fiddle, and see if I can't forget this mundane sphere, and its contemptible trials," and kissing his sister, whom he dearly loved, this careless fellow left the other sex, to sit as a committee of the whole upon the subject of "ways and means."

"It must have been a terrible storm, Mary," said Aunt Betsey, as she came in and sat down. "But where is Prudence? I had almost forgotten her in my excitement," rising at once to look for her. Passing into the sitting room, followed by Marian and her mother, and not finding her there, they entered the parlor, where they found the object of their search. She was sitting upon one end of the old fashioned hair cloth sofa, her head resting upon one of it's upholstered arms, while her body moved convulsively every few moments, through the emotion she was vainly attempting to suppress.

"Prudence Riverson!" said Aunt Betsey sternly, "I didn't expect you to show the white feather in this

way! The daughter of your father should not be seen giving way to tears and hysterics when thinking and acting are so badly needed. I have been over to see the mill and the dam, and—"

"I don't want to hear it yet," said Prudence, making a great effort to control her voice. "I'm not strong enough. It's a great pity the lightning did not strike the house and kill us all, while it was about it, and save us from facing starvation through the loss of our only means of support."

"Now, don't let me hear you talk any more heathenish nonsense like that, Prudence Riverson," said Aunt Betsey reverently. "You really ought to be a shamed of yourself. And if this is the best display of the Riverson pride you can give us at such a time as this, I hope we won't see much more of it."

This was uttered in the contemptuous tone that 'Aunt Betsey knew so well how to use when the occasion seemed to require it, and her words had the desired effect.

Aunt Prudence roused herself, and turned defiantly upon her tormentor. "I think I have not quite lost my senses, Betsey Claybank, and I do not thank you for your sneers. I will go over to the mill now, and see for myself what has happened, and then I will think about a remedy," she said proudly, and suiting her actions to her words, she left the house, and walked over to the mill.

"Now I think she is herself again," said Aunt Betsey in a congratulatory tone. "I don't believe she

will cry any more, or at least if she does, we won't know it, which may amount to the same thing."

"But you were a trifle hard on poor Prudence," protested Mrs. Riverson to Aunt Betsey. "You can hardly wonder that she should be terrified by the blow. I am sure I cannot see as yet what we can do about it. I hope Providence will direct us how to meet it, for it is clearly by His permission or direction that we have been subjected to this destructive power," said Mrs. Riverson gently.

"I just want to say in answer to that, Mary, that I don't believe in the kind of Providence, that goes about knocking things to pieces for poor people, and then kindly helpin' 'em to pick 'em up, and put them together again. The kind I look up to ain't engaged in such small business as that! If anything goes wrong, the trouble is usually with us. That dam wasn't strong enough, and the wall that gave way didn't have as good a foundation as it should, and that's about all there is to that," concluded Aunt Betsey.

Then Prudence came in and began to converse with Mrs. Riverson and Betsey. But Mrs. Riverson soon declared that the two might continue the discussion, but she would get some breakfast at once. Mr. Bean thought it would take more than a thousand dollars to put everything to rights again, and that a month's time might suffice for the work.

"Hello there, you've caught up some breakfast at last, have you? Come Jerry; they shan't slight you, if the old mill goes to pieces."

"Precious little you would care, sir, where a breakfast is to come from," said Aunt Prudence, addressing her nephew, who had in this boisterious manner announced his arrival.

"Oh, your mistaken there, Auntie, as usual," replied Ned with a laugh. "For if the worst comes, I can make a living for all of you, with my 'everlasting fiddle' as you are pleased to call it, and I will do it. But another cake, if you please, mamma, for I am hungry."

"My dear Ned, can't you make a little less noise when you enter the house?" asked his mother.

"Oh, I just want to keep you from acting as if you were attending a funeral," replied the incorrigible musician.

"The only way you could ever make a living would be with the aid of a monkey and a hand organ," snapped his Aunt Prudence viciously.

"Now, as I make it a point never to get mad when I am eating, I have no reply to make to your very unkind insinuation, Auntie," answered Ned, as he reached for the syrup.

"Go on Prudence, dear," said Mrs. Riverson.

"Let me see," replied that lady. "That boy would make a preacher forget his text, the way he comes into the house! Well, the question is, how can we rebuild, if it cost fifteen hundred dollars, when we have not to exceed a hundred dollars at our command?"

"Why, borrow it, of course," said Ned, as he helped himself to another cake. "When you have any hard

problems you want solved, just trot them out. That's easy! May be you'll think a musician has some brains after all?" concluded the young man coolly.

"I guess the boy has a little sense," remarked Aunt Betsey, who entertained a warm feeling for Ned, owing, possibly, to his intimacy with Jerry. "It does seem as if that was the only thing you could do, Prudence," she said, turning to her cousin, as she spoke.

"Yes, but people who borrow money, should expect to pay it back some day, and that would be out of the question with us," answered Prudence.

"Let the future take care of itself! Look well to the present," said the musical genius, with a mussled voice.

No other solution of the difficulty could be thought of, although Aunt Prudence insisted that it was in no sense a remedy, but merely putting off the evil day.

When they had finished, Deacon McCallum was seen walking rapidly toward the mill, with an anxious expression upon his face. The ladies knew he would not fail to stop and talk to them about the storm, and the trouble it had brought upon them.

"I can hardly say that it is a good morning for you, ladies, after looking at the damage the storm wrought upon your mill," said the Deacon, as he removed his hat and began wiping the perspiration from his brow and shining head. "But I hope you will not forget that we all have our troubles, and that few escape them. The Lord will help you to bear them, I am sure."

"Perhaps he will, Descon, but just now I feel more

like asking your advice, and acting upon it, than sitting down and waiting for an indication of His wishes," said Prudence a little tartly.

"Why, I declare, I am really sorry, Miss Prudence, to see you manifesting a rebellious spirit against t e will of the Lord," said the Deacon, leaning heavily against the fence.

"But how am I to know it is the will of the Lord?" she asked.

"Do you forget then, that He rules over all, and doeth all things well? and that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without His notice? And are not the hairs on our heads numbered? Then surely you must believe the Lord has meant to afflict you in this way for some wise purpose of his own, and you should bow in submission to His will. I am certainly willing to help in any way that I can," he concluded.

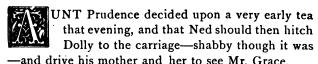
"Well, suppose we let the deacon look into the theological questions involved, and give us his conclusions later," said Aunt Betsey. "Just now, however, we want to know what you think it will cost to put things back as they were; and where these two women can borrow the money to do it."

"I think there will be no trouble about borrowing the necessary money," answered the Deacon, "but I will have to go back and look at things more closely with Mr. Bean, before I can tell you what I think about that. But I beg of you, Miss Riverson, not to harden your heart because of your troubles. Remember Job, and have more patience."

When the Deacon returned, he informed the sisterin-law that it would require between \$1,000 and \$1,500; that it might be nearer the first amount, but would very likely approach the latter. He further advised them to go and see Mr. Grace, who, he believed, was a worthy, pious man. He could at least tell them where they could borrow the money, Although their previous exand upon what terms. perience with Mr. Grace had not gained for that gentleman their entire confidence, they finally concluded to pay him an early visit, and see what they could do. Judge Howard was suggested to Prudence. but she declared that she could not think of that now, owing to Marian's engagement with Albert. She could not readily confess their straightened circumstances to him, by applying for a loan in their distress, and so they decided to see Mr. Grace.

# CHAPTER XVIII.

A VISIT TO MR. GRACE AND TO MRS. JACKSON.



Prudence did not like to go alone, for fear of unfavorable comments, and she therefore urged her sister-in-law to accompany her.

The carriage had long since seen its best days. This could hardly be otherwise, when it is remembered that it had been constructed for the Colonel in the early part of the century; and when first it appeared upon the turnpike at Germantown, or Manavunk, it had elicited the admiration of all who beheld Prudence remembered quite well how much she had enjoyed its luxurious cushions, and the privilege of gazing out of its windows; and how proud her father appeared as he drove along with the spirited horse he used to own, and which was a veritable equine ancestor of the eccentric Dolly. The seat of honor in the rockaway was the one behind. That in front was for the gentlemanly owner, or the servant. when they preferred one. Aunt Prudence scolded the brute for giving her such a sudden jerk, although she had been trying to guard against it. Aunt Betsey and Marian saw them start, and wished them all manner of good luck. The rattle made by their passage of the Wissahickon, caused Mr. Bean to run out of the mill, to see whether, perchance, another flood might not be coming down upon him. By the time they had reached the brow of the hill where Silas Riverson lived, Dolly was more demure, and the ladies could look about them and enjoy the cool evening breeze just setting in at the close of a warm summer day.

Aunt Prudence sat up straight, and looked proudly, and it must be confessed, rather stiffly about her; for she saw Silas Riverson standing at his front gate, and it was obvious that he knew the carriage and its occupants.

Aunt Prudence was dressed in black, a silk that had outlasted the days of their prosperity. Its tone suited well the sobriety of her disposition induced by her bereavement, her altered fortunes, and her unloved and rather lonely life. She wore a black straw bonnet, quite high in front, with only one or two simple artificial flowers inside, in imitation of lilacs, and had a black silk mantilla over her shoulders. Mrs. Riverson's handsome, smiling face, was set off by a light straw bonnet, and a white crepe shawl thrown over her shoulders. Every one thought Mrs. Riverson a handsome lady, her manner being so exceedingly kind.

Silas Riverson now advanced to the carriage, and

greeted the ladies kindly, and Ned, after looking at his aunt, arrested Dolly's footsteps.

"My dear cousins, I am heartily sorry for you in this wholesale destruction of your property," said Silas Riverson, as he approached them. "Can I do anything for you?" he continued.

"No, I thank you," said Prudence, "we will rebuild as soon as possible, and then things will go on as before. Are you all well?" she asked.

"Oh, quite well, Prudence. Hang it, why couldn't the storm have damaged me, instead of you two ladies? It is too bad, I declare," said he honestly enough. "I could stand it, and I hope you can, too," he concluded in an inquiring manner.

"I believe," replied Prudence with great dignity, "that you knew something of the financial condition of my father, and you can hardly suppose his children are not able to meet a little difficulty of this kind. But we are in a hurry, cousin, and must be going, good evening."

Ned understood his aunt, and at once started Dolly, but he also said: "Aunt Prude, how the deuce could you treat the old fellow that way? He is kind, and would like to be taken into your confidence, and help us, I know he would. Yet you talked as if all we had to do was to go to the bank and get a few thousands to fix up with."

"Now, young man, don't meddle with this business, if you please. I don't propose to have Silas Riverson looking into our affairs, or rather his daughters, both

very amiable young ladies. In such an emergency I prefer to depend upon strangers, and if we haven't the money we ought to have, all the world shan't know it."

Soon after they drew up in front of the comfortable mansion of Mr. Grace, who happened to be seated upon his front porch with his wife and children.

"My dear ladies, I am delighted to see you," said Mr. Grace earnestly.

"We came to see you on a matter of business this evening, Mr. Grace," said Prudence rather shyly.

Mr. Grace assisted the ladies from their carriage, and conducted them to the house, where they were cordially greeted by Mrs. Grace and the children. After a few moments spent in conversation upon the porch, Mr. Grace, perceiving that they desired a private interview with him, requested them to walk into the parlor. Master Ned followed, although his aunt gave him a look, which he rightly interpreted as a command to remain outside. When they were all seated, Aunt Prudence gave an account of the damage the late storm had caused them, and the estimated cost of repairs, whereupon Mr. Grace expressed his sympathy in very feeling language.

"We find it necessary to borrow about \$1,500, Mr. Grace, and have called to see if you knew where we could procure it for a period of three years at least, and upon the mill property as security," said Prudence Riverson.

Mr. Grace at once looked thoughtful.

"I think I will be able to obtain the money for you,

ladies" said he at last. "It is not particularly desirable property, but I will make every effort to effect it, since you have been so unfortunate," he concluded.

"The interest will of course be six per cent?" asked Prudence. "And we should like to know what the additional expense will be for the necessary legal papers?"

"That I will place at a very low figure to you, Miss Riverson. I can never be exacting when dealing with ladies or clergymen, and I will say that the entire expense shall not exceed fifty dollars," this was said with the air of a philanthropist who had just performed a noble deed.

"I had no idea it would cost so much!" said Prudence. "Can it not be done for less, Mr. Grace? Just at present our available resources are not large."

"Believe me, ladies," replied Mr. Grace with firmness, "that I have made every possible concession out of regard for you and your family, and I shall be pleased to serve you upon those terms."

"Well, we certainly expect to pay for everything we obtain," replied Prudence stiffly. "When can you let us know about it, Mr. Grace?"

"By to-morrow evening, or the following morning, on my way to the city," said Mr. Grace in reply.

"Very well, then, I suppose we had better instruct him to procure the money for us, don't you think so, Mary?" turning to her sister as she spoke.

"Whatever you think is best for us to do," returned Mrs. Riverson sweetly. "No doubt you will do all in

your power for our interests, Mr. Grace?" she said turning to that gentleman with her most winning smile.

Mr. Grace was so susceptible to the charms of the other sex, that for the moment he thought of mentioning twenty-five dollars, and almost forgot that he was a married man. But the next instant his business instinct resumed control, and the reduction was not mentioned. Then the ladies took their leave, and were escorted across the lawn by Mr Grace, who handed them into their carriage, trying to show them every possible attention.

When his mother and aunt were safe inside the carriage, Ned untied the refractory Dolly, and thus avoided trouble. As he was turning round, and while Mr. Grace and wife were still watching them, Ned remarked in a tone rather too loud:

"Aunt Prude, you shouldn't take up with the old curmudgeon's offer."

"Will you hush, Ned? What do you mean? Mr. Grace will surely hear you," said his aunt.

"And it's precious little I care, if he does," growled the irrepressible boy.

The people who lived here in those days were mostly workers, and in the fields, upon either side of the pike, men and boys were to be seen hoeing corn.

A short distance beyond was the elegant home of Judge Howard. The grounds were so extensive, they might easily have supported the families of several poor men, but beautiful forest trees occupied the

greater portion of the premises, through which a few deer were allowed to roam by day. Prudence looked at this property with an interest much intensified by Marian's existing engagement with the only son of the proprietor, nor did she refrain from making comments, which revealed to her companions the nature of her Here her niece would some day rule as mistress, and would order her horses and carriage, and go abroad in no such miserable half-genteel style as they were compelled to adopt. Ned took the occasion as he often did, now that he was older, to announce his dislike of the engagement, but he was soon silenced by his aunt, and the next moment was directed to "look out for the cars" by the great sign to that effect across the pike, and a short distance farther brought them to the toll-gate, where Mr. Jackson was on duty, as usual.

In spite of his rheumatism, Mr. Jackson was not long in reaching the door of his sitting-room so soon as he recognized the Riverson carriage, nor would he see the pennies that Prudence continued to hold toward him. By this time Ned had driven up to the post and had jumped out, just as Mrs. Jackson came running up.

"Why, the Lord bless us, but this is a go sure enough. If here isn't Prudence and Mrs. Riverson herself, with Master Ned a drivin' em. Rube, bring a chair, quick, so the ladies can get out easy. How do you do? Laws a me! and I was just sayin' to Rube to-day, says I, I wonder when them ladies will come to

see me again, says I, and here you are," and the good old creature seized them by the hand affectionately. Rube made good time with the chair, and secured his wife's commendation, and in a few moments the party was in Mrs. Jackson's parlor which she kept so sacredly guarded, that it required Mr. Jackson, assisted by his wife, to raise the windows, they had stuck so, ever since the room had been painted some ten years before.

Then Mrs. Jackson hastened to the well with a pitcher, and brought them some cool water to drink.

"Here is your toll," Mr. Jackson, said Prudence, extending her hand toward him with the coppers in it.

"An' do you suppose that my man will take a few miserable coppers from the hand of the daughter of Col. Riverson, the man as gave him his place, for drivin' through that gate, and them not havin' passed through it yet?" asked Mrs. Jackson with indignation and con-"But why didn't you come in time to take tea with us? And you know well enough, my dear," turning to Mrs. Riverson, "that I can make a cup of tea to your taste. Ah me, how it brings back the old times to see you, and there's Master Ned too. Bless my soul, but he's most a man, and I've forgotten just how old he is this blessed minute, who ought to know if any one should, besides his mother. Now there's my almanac's," continued the old nurse, that spirit possessing her once more, and reaching toward the drawer—they all knew so well—where the precious documents were preserved.

Aunt Prudence saw the danger, and did all she

could to avoid the threatened hour's talk about the old events, so full of interest to Mrs. Jackson. This having been averted, Mrs. Jackson hastened to offer her visitors some cake and some currant wine of her own manufacture, and then Mrs. Riverson asked about her cows and her milk-house. This served as an excuse for Aunt Jackson to show Mrs. Riverson all through the spring-house on the side of the hill, when the opportunity both ladies had desired, to talk about marketing Mrs. Riverson's butter and eggs, presented itself. The ladies then took their departure, reaching home by nine o'clock.

### CHAPTER XIX.

THE BUSINESS TRANSACTION WITH MR. GRACE.

R. GRACE was a very prompt man of business. He was always inculcating this virtue in others, and often did so in his address to his brethren in the church. It was not surprising, therefore, that he should take a walk over to Riverson's the following evening, after his return from the city. As he was walking rapidly down the lane toward the creek, twirling his light cane very gracefully at every step, his progress was suddenly arrested at Silas Riverson's gate by the appearence of that gentleman, who greeted Mr. Grace heartily, and engaged him in conversation, somewhat against his will.

"You don't mean to say you are taking a walk to Germantown so late in the evening as this, Mr. Grace?" asked Mr. Riverson after they had exchanged the usual courtesies of the day.

"Oh, no sir, not quite so far as that. It is only a little business matter this side of Germantown, that I am looking after this evening," returned Mr. Grace, not at all disposed to acquaint Mr. Riverson with his destination, if he could avoid it.

"You do some business for my cousins across the creek, do you not?" asked Silas, evidently bent upon extracting his destination from Mr. Grace.

"Why yes, I have advised them a little," he replied.

"By the way, Grace" said Silas with a wink, "that was a clever little thing you unearthed about the old Colonel's sale of the Fuller farm to Judge Howard; it would do any lawyer credit, and ought to have done Prudence and Mary some good."

"What do you refer to, Mr. Riverson?" said Mr. Grace, looking exceedingly surprised in spite of his efforts to conceal it.

"Oh, you needn't act as if there was nothing in it, Grace. Come now, that young Ned is the only one of the family I can get anything out of. And besides, I joked the Judge about it, but he wouldn't tell me how much you got out of him, though he growled that it was a great plenty, ha! ha!".

Mr. Grace was really startled! He knew it was no longer of use to deny it, and retorted:

"I advised them so they could make something out

of it, but Prudence wouldn't listen to me, and I would have had all my work for nothing, if I had not obtained my remuneration from the Judge. That was only business, you know? I guess the Judge was satisfied?" he asked, hoping to obtain some light upon that point.

"I thought he felt a little sore over it, as if you got the best of him in the deal. That was about all I could see. But I wish you would advise these women to permit their relatives to help them, when they are in trouble. I know mighty well they are in trouble now, and need money, no matter how much the old man may have had, and should have left them when he died."

"Certainly, certainly, Mr. Riverson," said Mr. Grace, but inwardly he thought he would hardly be such a fool as that, when he had the business all arranged.

"I made Prudence angry with me once, when we were both much younger than we are now, and as it was connected with a love affair, she has never forgiven me, especially since it turned out that I was right, and she was wrong. You see it is like stepping in between a man and his wife. But you may tell her for me, that I would be glad to lend them what money they need at six, or even five per cent," said Silas.

"Very creditable action for a relative, I assure you, Mr. Riverson, and she ought to accept it, but you know how strangely preverse some ladies are. Good evening Mr. Riverson, I must be going," said Mr.

Grace.

"Good-bye, Grace. Let me know upon your way back, if she will accept my help."

"You see I am punctual, Miss Prudence," said Mr. Grace, as he seated himself and drew some papers out of his pocket. "I have found a party who is willing to lend you the money, although he did at first object to the terms. However, I succeeded in overcoming his objections by a proper representation of our obligations to each other, but he does not care to be known in the transaction."

"But I must say, that I prefer to know who I am dealing with in a matter of this kind," said Prudence.

"Why, my dear lady, the papers are made out to me, and you will be dealing with me alone, and your interests shall be jealously guarded."

"I don't know that it makes any great difference," Prudence replied, "but when could the money be obtained?"

"The day after to-morrow, Miss Riverson, if you and Mrs. Riverson will go to Germantown or Manayunk, and sign these papers in the presence of a justice of the peace, and will leave them at my house to-morrow evening, I will be able to hand you the money the next day," said Mr. Grace.

"If we do not know of whom we are borrowing this money, how can we pay the interest?" asked Prudence.

"You have only to come to me about that. I will receipt for it, and hand it to the proper person, and endorse it upon the note," answered Mr. Grace, and a few moments later, he had taken his leave.

Then the ladies began to examine the papers Mr. Grace had left in their charge.

"But this paper seems to be a deed from Mary and me to Mr. Grace, so far as I can make it out," said Prudence, after reading it over carefully. I am sure we don't propose to sell the mill and the land on which it stands, especially for such a ridiculous price as this."

"Let me see it once, Prudence; may be I know more about such things than you do," said Aunt Betsey, reaching for the document, which Prudence handed to her. After adjusting her glasses comfortably, she read the paper, and when she had finished laid it down and said:

"Shucks, Prudence! you might have known this was only a mortgage deed, only in case you fail to pay the principal and interest at the time agreed upon, would this paper allow them to take it away from you, and then you would have a long time during which you could redeem it. I wouldn't be afraid of this, as much as I would of the man. He's too slick for me. But may be I don't know anything about him," concluded Aunt Betsey.

"But you can't suggest any other plan to get us out of this trouble, can you, Betsey?" asked Prudence.

"No, I must confess that, and yet I don't like this. Perhaps that is unreasonable in me, but I can't help it, Prudence. I am sure I hope it will turn out all right in the end," said Aunt Betsey.

The next day it became necessary for the ladies to ride once more in the carriage with Ned for a

driver, and they chose Germantown rather than Man-They were equally well known in both places, and they selected the former, because the road leading to it was preferable to the other. The Justice was an old acquaintance of the family, and transacted their business with very little of the inquisitiveness of the country magistrate. He did look surprised, however, when he saw they were executing a mortgage upon their property, and Prudence, perceiving that he regarded it as a discovery, hastened to intimate to him, that occasionally one's own money could not be called in soon enough to cover an emergency. In Germantown the Riversons were looked upon as a wealthy family. They had enjoyed this reputation so long, that the discovery indicated by this mortgage would occasion no little surprise to their friends. But the magistrate had previously felt so certain of their financial independence, that the words uttered purposely by Prudence had the effect she intended, and he dismissed the first suspicion from his mind.

When their business had been transacted, Ned insisted upon visiting his friend, Professor Carl. The Professor was not at home, but as Ned heard the loud swelling tones of the church organ close by, he knew where his friend was, and he drove there at once. He soon returned with the jolly German at his side, who greeted the two ladies with his usual extravagant politeness.

"Now, what could be better than such a surprise as this, ladies? I am very glad you called with Ned.

I have been wishing to see you together for a month or two. I have not much time to spare from my lessons, and that is the only reason you have not seen me at your house. Pray get down and come into the church. Ned and I can play something together and you will have an opportunity to see how he is getting on with his music."

"What do you say, Prudence?" asked Mrs. Riverson of her sister-in-law. "I should love to hear Professor Carl play upon the organ, and I should like to hear Ned also."

"I think we have time enough, Mary," Prudence said, "but the fact is, Professor, I do not appreciate my nephew's taste for and devotion to music. He ought to be interested in something better."

The ladies were being assisted from the carriage, while this conversation was taking place, and they were now walking into the church. At the conclusion of Prudence Riverson's last sentence, Professor Carl looked up, and his eyes were lighted with a half angry enthusiasm. "Something better than music, did you say, Miss Riverson? Ah! pardon me, my dear lady, that does not exist. If sickness comes upon you; if everything goes wrong in business; if your true love deserts you for another less worthy; in fact, in any or all of the disappointments of life, which sink so many into despair and death, what is so powerful as good music, to bring the despondent one back to earth and friends once more?"

"I am not so far removed from our Ouaker ancestry,

as Ned," continued Prudence, "and perhaps it is owing to that fact, that I have nothing of the musical craze."

But Prudence was quieted, or perhaps suppressed, by the Professor's earnestness and she seated herself resignedly, to listen as long as Ned and his indulgent mother desired to remain. While the two musicians were playing, apparently lost to the world about them, the ladies were joined in the pew where they were seated, by Mr. Tedrow, the pastor of the church, who happened to be passing, and came in. He had met both ladies before, and knew them at once as relatives He told them of Ned's progress, that his of Ned's. talent was really remarkable, and should be given free scope for its complete development. Mr. Tedrow went on to inform Mrs. Riverson that Ned was becoming a very competent leader, and that it would be a great shame, if such a lad could not be permitted to follow his musical inclinations. He assured her that Ned's proper sphere in the future would be best fulfilled by leading an orchestra, that even now he could lead their own, an amateur organization of ten instruments, almost as well as Professor Carl.

This interview with Mr. Tedrow and the grandeur of the music, caused the self-sacrificing mother to resolve that she would gratify her boy's desire, and would devote all her energies to that object.

The next day Mr. Grace called upon his friend, Judge Howard, at his office in the city, with the mortgage and note properly made out and attested. The Judge invited him into his private office.

"Why, sir," remarked the Judge, looking over the papers, "I did not know the loan was to be made to the Riverson ladies. How is it, you did not mention that fact? You know my son is engaged to Mrs. Riverson's daughter, I presume?"

"I had heard so," replied Mr. Grace. "They are needing the money to repair the mill and dam," said he, "and are willing to pay a good price."

"Or, perhaps they can't help themselves when they are in your hands, eh?" said the Judge, with a cynical laugh. "But do they know the money is to come from me?"

"Oh, no! I thought it unnecessary to mention that little item; but I promised to see to that, and they were satisfied," answered Mr. Grace.

"What commission did you say you would charge them, Mr. Grace?" inquired the Judge, as he opened his check book.

"They expect me to retain fifty dollars for my services," replied Mr. Grace.

"Of course, you expect to divide that commission with me, Grace? You must do the fair thing, you know?"

"You astonish me, Judge Howard!" returned Mr. Grace. "I have had all the work connected with this matter and obtained the loan for you. Certainly, I had no intention of dividing the commission."

"I can't allow you to keep it all, Grace. I am not unreasonable in business, but you know how easily you came out ahead in that transaction about the Ful-

ler farm; and I won't make the loan on any other terms," placing his check book back in its drawer, as he concluded, and swinging himself around in his chair, he looked Mr. Grace squarely in the face.

At the mention of the previous affair, Mr. Grace's face flushed slightly. He was thinking whether or not it would pay to quarrel with the Judge, then he said: "You are unusually hard upon me to-day, Judge; but if you insist upon it, have your way. But you really don't consider how much I have to do outside with my money. The amount I give to the support of our church and its missionary societies, is growing larger each year. I really cannot stand it if it continues," he concluded, with an injured air.

"Come, brother Grace, don't try to throw dust in my eyes," said the Judge, sarcastically.

Once more Mr. Grace colored deeply, but as the check was now ready, and he deprecated any discussion with a man who held the worldly views that Judge Howard did upon such serious subjects, he only made a mild protest and departed.

Mr. Grace was not thoroughly satisfied, as he had counted upon the sum of fifty dollars as his reward. He was busy devising an excuse that would enable him to add to the amount which had been so fearfully depleted, by its division with the Judge. The next day he called upon the ladies, and told them the money was ready for them. He had wisely deposited it in the Manayunk bank, and gave Prudence a check for

fourteen hundred, saying he would give her the balance in cash; and as he said this, Aunt Betsey, who was present, noticed that he turned and fidgeted uneasily in his chair. Then he began to count out money in ten dollar bills. "Ten, twenty, thirty, forty," and then he stopped. "It is unpleasant for me to say, Miss Riverson, that I have unavoidably incurred an additional expense of ten dollars in this transaction that I could not possibly foresee; but a matter came up that made it necessary, and I supposed you would rather go on with it than drop it," looking inquiringly at Prudence, as he handed her the forty dollars.

"I guess it doesn't make much difference how little we get. It will probably be all the same in a thousand years from now. Nor will we need it when we are angels in heaven, Mr. Grace," said Prudence, in her most sarcastic vein. That was all she said, and then she arose, which was sufficient intimation to Mr. Grace that he might take his leave. He looked disturbed, and made several attempts to open a conversation, all of which failing, he very politely bid them good-night, and left the house.

## CHAPTER XX.

SYDNEY RANSOM AND ALBERT HOWARD MEET AT
RIVERSON'S.

O, Betsey Claybank," said Prudence Riverson, just after Mr. Grace had left the house, "I never would have believed without this ex-

perience, that men would try to cheat every poor woman who happens to transact business with them. It makes me heartsick when I think of the trouble we have had, and are yet likely to encounter, since we were left alone to battle with the world."

"Yes, there is too much truth in what you say, Prudence," said Aunt Betsey. "But then, you see, you are altogether too easy. You should have told that hypocrite to take his money back where he got it, and that you would look further, rather than submit to such an imposition. If he had to deal with me, his palaver wouldn't serve him so well. I could hardly hold my tongue while you were talking. You must act like a man, Prudence. That's the only way to do, when you are left to battle with men."

"Yes, but neither my father nor my brother ever treated a woman in that way, whether she had a protector or not. I know that, and I can't stoop to act

like a man, if I am imposed upon. They would not like to have me do it, Betsey, and you know it," said Prudence, the tears coming into her eyes, and her voice quivering, as she finished the sentence.

"How much better it would have been for you, Prudence, if you had not sent Richard away. vou would have had a man in every sense of the word to look after your interests," said Aunt Betsey, with a sigh. Her words did not excite the anger of Prudence, on the contrary, she came near breaking down once more, but the next moment, with a perceptible effort, she straightened up and said, with something of her old spirit: "No, it wouldn't have been better, for I might have been subjected to the tyranny of one man all my life. As it is now, I can avoid a mean, tyrannical man, when I find him out. If I were tied to one of that kind-and the Lord knows, I find them all too much alike—how could I help myself, I should like to know? And why didn't you take your own advice, Betsey?"

This last question Prudence regarded as a poser to that energetic maiden lady.

"That is easily answered, Prudence. Betsey Claybank and Prudence Riverson are two entirely different persons. I have never seen the time when I needed the help of any being that wore trousers, and I never expect to, if I live to be as old as Methuselah. I'd like to see the man who could beat me out of a cent. You could be sure that he would earn his money. But you are different, and that is why I said what I

did. I meant no offence, Prudence, however, when Ned is a little older, he will be able to assist you."

"I believe you were intended for a man, Betsey. Indeed I do! I never saw another woman like you. And as for Ned! Pooh! Don't mention him to me in connection with business. Marian will always be able to do more in that way than he will."

"I don't know about that, Prudence, I think you underrate the poor fellow, although I don't set any great store by his musical nonsense *myself*. Perhaps he will disappoint all of us some day. But here comes one I would sooner bet on than all the rest in these parts," said Aunt Betsey, "and I believe he is coming here."

"I suppose you mean Sydney Ransom?" said Prudence, with a perceptible sneer in her voice.

But Aunt Betsey was already out on the piazza to meet him, and did not hear the last words of Prudence. Aunt Betsey gave Sydney a very warm reception at the gate, and asked him to walk in. As they entered the sitting-room together, Prudence arose to greet him, but did so without any demonstration of favor, or the expression of gratification at his visit. She remembered at once that Marian had told her that morning of Albert's intended visit in the evening, and she disliked any interference with his plans.

I only heard of the great damage done to the mill to-day, Miss Prudence," said he, after he had given her proper greeting, "and then I determined to come over to-night and learn all about it. I am very sorry that you have met with such a loss. Can I do anything in connection with its repair?" he asked.

At this moment Ned and Marian came into the room together. Ned heard Sydney's last words, and before his aunt could reply, he seized his old friend by the hand and blurted out:

"Why, of course there is, old fellow. I'd like to know who should know more about the old shebang and the dam than you, Sid Ransom? And why couldn't you give us some pointers about putting things in shape again?"

"I hoped to be able to do that, Ned, and that, together with the pleasure of seeing you all again, brought me down here this evening," said Sydney.

"We are very glad to see you Sydney," said Marian, as she took him by the hand. "You do not honor us very often with your presence. Not as often as you promised, when you were at the old mill several years ago," said Marian, in a bantering tone; for she noticed his embarrassment, though it may well be doubted whether she appreciated the cause of it.

"Now, Miss Marian, I am sure you are not speaking for your brother, when you say that. He at least knows very well that when I turned my back upon the mill and that life, it never entered my mind to turn from the family that has treated me with such uniform kindness. I only wish I could have an opportunity to repay in some measure, the debt I owe your father and the rest of you, as well," said Sydney, gravely.

"Why, Mr. Ransom, I am ever so glad to see you," said Mrs. Riverson, who just then entered the room. "We hardly see you often enough to suit me. Where do you hide yourself?"

"It is a great deprivation to me, Mrs. Riverson, but my studies and my duties in the drug store take up nearly all my time, and in the evening I often accompany Doctor Kennedy upon a long trip, as much to keep him company now that he is getting old, as to learn by observation at the bedside. I assure you again, it is not because visiting you is a disagreeable task for me, Mrs. Riverson," he concluded, smiling pleasantly.

"You are always the same, Mr. Ransom," she resumed with some stress upon the prefix.

"Dear me," exclaimed Marian, "here is my mother rebuking me, by addressing you as Mr. Ransom, when I have just been calling you Sydney. I suppose you will pardon me, Mr. Ransom, will you not? You see I have forgotten that we are all several years older, and that a boy does become a man at last."

"Do I act as if I wanted to impress you with the fact that I am now a man, so you can 'mister' me?" asked Sydney of the party. "If so, I am acting strangely indeed. I am sure, I do not feel that way."

"Come, Sydney," said Ned, "I guess it is light enough yet to show you how the mill was used up by the storm."

"I did look at the dam before I came to the house,

Ned, but I would like to look at it again," so the two went out together.

Aunt Prudence had not taken much part in the conversation, but sat quietly by the window listening to all that was said, while she was cutting the leaves of the last number of Godey's magazine.

"Sydney is such a manly young fellow," said Mrs. Riverson, "it seems as if he could always help you, no matter what might happen. Did it not seem that way to you, Prudence?" she asked.

"No, I can't say that it did, Mary," replied her sister, "I think the one who can help you the most, is the one who has the most money. That seems to cure more ills than anything else in this world, so far as I have been able to discover. That at least has been my experience."

"I hardly think you are altogether just, when you talk that way, Prudence," said Mrs. Riverson. "But then the trouble we have passed through may be enough to account for it," looking at Betsey apologetically, as she finished.

Soon Ned and Sydney came in by the side door, and Ned proceeded to acquaint them with the results of their examination. Sydney promised to give Mr. Bean some suggestions the next day, and Mrs. Riverson thanked him warmly for his advice, and Prudence could do no less, although it lacked the warmth of feeling so characteristic of Mrs. Riverson.

At this moment they noticed that Albert Howard

had driven up, and was just ready to enter the house. Aunt Prudence brightened at once and said:

"Ned, can't you run out and assist Mr. Howard to tie his horse?"

"No, my dear Aunt, I don't think I can. I am at present engaged. I am inclined to think that Mr. Howard is big enough, and even ugly enough, to tie his own horse."

"Will you hold your tongue, young impudence?" said Aunt Prudence severely.

At this moment Albert rapped at the door, and Marian hastened to admit him. Sydney Ransom's face flushed slightly when he noticed Albert's arrival, and it was obvious that he was uneasy, and regretted not having taken his leave earlier.

As Marian ushered Albert into the room, she turned to him and said:

"I suppose you are acquainted with Mr. Ransom?"

"Oh yes; howd'y do, Sid?" he said, reaching two fingers to Sydney, who at once rubbed the back of his hand upon them, thinking that a sufficient return of his very cordial greeting. Marian looked annoyed, but Albert continued:

"I've seen Tom Ransom working around our house too often, not to know his boy. I guess you know our place pretty well, from the number of times you have brought the old man's dinner there," said Albert, as he stooped to brush a particle of dust from the leg of his fine broadcloth pants.

"Yes," returned Sydney, "I do know your place

pretty well, and I think I know you quite well also," the latter sentence being uttered very deliberately, in order to let Albert understand, if no one else did, the contempt in which he was held by the speaker. That was his object. Marian felt sorry that Sydney happened to visit them at the same time with Albert, inasmuch as he came to see them so seldom. Nor was she altogether satisfied with Albert for thus treating an old friend of her's, who, although beneath him socially, was so worthy in every way.

Albert conversed with Aunt Prudence, and found that lady smiling as usual, and quite ready to defer to his opinions, when he expressed any. And he was always very polite to Mrs. Riverson, paying her marked attention. But upon Ned he never wasted much time. He could see well enough there was little love lost between them. Ned now asked Sydney some questions about his studies; and when he would be ready to begin the practice of medicine? Albert could not help overhearing this, and partly from a desire to pay some attention to a guest of the family, and partly to make him feel the inferiority of his position to his own, he entered into the conversation.

"By the way, Sydney, when do you get through learning the pill trade? I don't see what ever possessed you to take up with it?"

"Oh, I expect to graduate next spring, and then I will go into partnership with Doctor Kennedy. But I do not look upon my profession as a pill trade."

"Well, there is considerable difference of opinion

on that point," returned Albert with provoking coolness. "For my part, I don't place it as high as you do. It is true that when we are sick, we are apt to require one of the trade, just as we do a carpenter in the case of a leaky roof, and as between the two, I don't know but the pill man is as likely to do his work as well as the other, for I believe I have never known a leaky roof to be stopped yet. But they are both trades, to my notion!"

"For my part," returned Sydney with cool contempt, "I think it is a very silly notion. But perhaps you cannot help that, inasmuch as you were born the son of a rich man, and I see with some of the disadvantages belonging to that station in life. But I do not forget the presence of these ladies sir, and I will say no more," observing that Albert had risen to his feet, and stood glaring at him with heightened color.

Aunt Prudence was alarmed, and hastened to interpose.

"Perhaps you are both right and wrong," she said, looking as pleasantly as possible toward Albert, who thereupon resumed his seat, while Marian had taken up a position by the window, much troubled.

"No," said Ned, in reply to his Aunt Prudence, "I think one view is altogether wrong, and the other nearly correct."

Sydney, wishing to relieve his friends from the embarrassing situation, and not enjoying the visit very much, now declared that he must go, and after bidding the family a courteous good night, which was ac-

knowledged by Marian with an attempted smile, he left the house accompanied by Ned, who walked up the hill with him.

After this episode, the conversation with Albert Howard was conducted mainly by Aunt Prudence, for Marian did not recover her usual bouyancy of spirits during the remainder of Albert's visit that evening. Nor did it help matters any when he turned to her and asked:

"Does that vulgar son of Tom Ransom's honor you very often with his society?" Marian smiled painfully, but was silent.

## CHAPTER XXI.

SOME OF SYDNEY RANSOM'S TRIALS.

YDNEY RANSOM walked slowly and thoughtfully toward the bridge, while Ned Riverson talked to him continually about

the events of the evening. Ned was always ready to talk when not engaged with his music, and he felt that his old friend had been very shabbily treated in their house; and with commendable honor, he sought to do all he could, to efface its memory from Sydney Ransom's mind. "I say, old fellow," said he, at last, "I wanted to be kind to you, so I am walking part

way home with you; but if you'd rather be alone, I'll go back."

Sydney stopped at once, and looking at Ned seriously, he said: "No, you won't go back feeling that way about it, Ned, for I won't let you. Forgive me, Ned, but I did not intend to be so moody. Let us sit down upon this rock, now we are at the top of the hill, and I will promise to be attentive. You are always kind to me, Ned, may God bless you for it."

"Oh, don't feel bad about anything that happened to-night, Sydney," said Ned, as he seated himself by his side. "The truth is, Sydney, Albert Howard is too stuck up for any use, and it makes me feel mighty bad when I think of him as the prospective husband of Marian. Confound it, I've wanted to tell some one for a long time, and it will be a relief to me now that I have."

"I think I can sympathize with you, Ned, for I know how you love your sister, and that she returns it. I suppose there is no doubt about the marriage?" asked Sydney, with an anxiety probably lost to Ned.

"There is no such good luck, I am afraid," returned Ned. "I believe they are to be married sometime next year, but I live in hopes something will turn up to prevent it. It may be the Fool Killer will come along. Who knows, eh, Sydney?" concluded the impulsive brother.

"Now, Ned, you allow your feelings to run away with your judgment. It is not right for you to talk in that way about a gentleman your sister thinks

enough of to marry. For, of course, she would not marry a man she did not love. I think I know her well enough for that," said Sydney, unconsciously heaving a sigh as he finished.

"That's the curious part of it, Sydney. I have had my doubts about that, and yet, as you say, Sis wouldn't be likely to marry a man she did not love. No, sir, I don't believe she would. Now, to-night, I think she was a little angry with him because he was so hateful to you, although, upon my soul, you gave him as good as he sent."

"You know how grateful I have always felt toward Marian," said Sydney, "for the interest she took in me when I went to work in the mill as Tom Ransom's son, as Albert sneeringly puts it, and how she lent me books and talked with me about them, and at last made me dissatisfied with my life, until I determined to study medicine; and then she interceded with Doctor Kennedy for me? When I remind you of this, Ned, you will easily understand why I should feel sad to think I can never visit her and feel free to talk to her then, as we have been accustomed to do in the past."

"It's a shame, hanged if it ain't, Sydney," said Ned, impulsively. "I'll give Sis a piece of my mind about it yet."

"But I want you to promise me, Ned, that you will never repeat one word of what has passed between us to your sister. Do not make your relations with Sydney any worse than they are at present, for your sis-

ter's sake. But, good-bye, Ned. I am glad you are getting on so famously in the city with your music. Next winter we can see each other often, for I will be there attending the medical college. I guess there will never be any trouble between us, Ned?"

"You can bet on that every time, Sydney," said Ned, heartily, as he turned from his friend and walked down the hill.

Sydney entered his home and found his mother in the sitting room, with her lap full of clothing more or less dilapidated, which she was trying to make serviceable again.

"You were gone a good while, Sydney," said his mother. Did you see the whole family? And were they glad to see you?"

"Yes, I saw them all and I think they were rather glad to see me. Aunt Betsey is there, and I am sure she was glad I called, nor could there be any doubt about Ned's welcome," answered Sydney.

"Then, from what you say, as well as what you don't say," said his mother, "I should think you were uncertain about your welcome from some of the rest of them. I am sure Mrs. Riverson likes you."

"She gave me a very cordial welcome," said Sydney. "She is one of the dearest ladies I ever knew."

"How about the daughter?" inquired the mother, rather archly. "Has she changed and grown proud, since her engagement to Judge Howard's son?"

"I am happy to say that I saw no evidence of it, mother. But, unluckily, Albert Howard came to

spend the evening while I was there, and perhaps you can imagine how the dandy would treat me."

"Why, how did he treat you?" she asked, as she looked at her son full of interest.

"In his sneering way, of course, and with constant allusions to the inferiority of our social position, and even speaking contemptuously of the profession I have chosen. But it is useless to make you feel bad over such a fellow," hoping to break off the conversation there.

"Yes, it is, Sydney. This is all I have to look forward to with pride and hope; and as you are so near success, I want to know everything I can about your sorrows, as well as your joys. I have a right to that little consolation in my hard life, my son. Don't you think so?"

"Indeed you have, mother. But I hardly thought you cared so much about it as that."

"Ah, it is little you know, Sydney, how a mother wishes and hopes for her children, and how she cherishes, under such circumstances as mine, the prospect that her only son may yet become a man of honor and importance in the community, where she has felt herself despised."

"I hope your prophecy may come true," said he, smiling fondly at her. "But I am afraid you are only a partial mother."

"I guess you'r about right there, for the first time since you got the big head, and gave up a good trade and went around aping your betters. And your mother has helped you on with it. But women never did have much sense. All they think of is to make a show and wear fine clothes. But I wash my hands of this nonsense. You'll soon be of age, now, and your lawful parents can't expect to control you then, if they couldn't before. And you ought to be helping them several years yet, instead of being a drag upon 'em."

This interruption came from the kitchen, out of the lips of Tom Ransom, the ostensible head of the family. Mrs. Ransom turned quickly, with a contemptuous expression upon her face.

Not much attention was paid to the querulous remarks of the husband and father. Of late, these two had ignored him and his opinions, to a very great degree.

"Did you think that Albert Howard's language to you was approved by the ladies of the Riverson family?" asked his mother, in a low tone.

"No, I do not think so. Even Marian looked hurt and uneasy, and tried to stop it. Had it not been for that, I might have been tempted to do more than insult him in turn; but very fortunately I was able to control myself," he answered.

"I hope it isn't because you know that he is to marry Marian that you are so much cut up by his treatment of you in her presence," said his mother, slowly, and turning her sharp black eyes upon her son quite suddenly.

Sydney's face flushed, and then the mother, with a

woman's intuition, seemed to read her son's hopeless secret. Then she continued:

"I am very sorry for you, Sydney. I had no idea of this. I did not think you could be so foolish as that! You must trample upon every feeling of that kind!"

"That is just what I have always tried to do, mother, and I have never admitted to myself what you seem to have discovered just now. No one will be the wiser; but I am sure that no one can be blamed for loving the most beautiful of creatures! No one but you shall ever know. You can depend upon that, mother," said he, proudly.

"Now I know you are trying to help him along with his devilish fine airs and nonsense, by the way you are talking," came in the piping voice from the kitchen. I heard enough to see that Sydney needs a little sensible advice from his father once in awhile, and I want him to profit by it. I don't want to look on and see a son of mine make a fool of himself by attempting to rival Albert Howard, the finest young gentleman in this part of the country. It would only make your parents ashamed of you, and I hope you will be more sensible."

The son looked stunned for a moment. "You don't know what you are talking about when you drive at me in that way," said he.

"Oh, yes; but I do! and I want to tell you to keep out of Albert Howard's way, or it will be the worst for you and the rest of us. You ought to know that I get more work and better pay from Judge Howard, than from any other man in Roxborough or Manayunk."

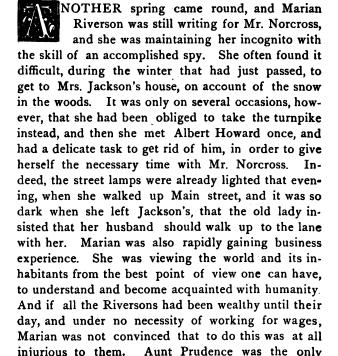
"But I am not so sure that it is work that I should be proud to know my father is doing," said Sydney, warmly. ," I have heard more than one allusion to the character of that work."

"I ain't quite so highty-tyty as my son, but I hope I won't need any employment in this neck of woods many years longer. I had a talk with Mr. Butler the other day, and he's going out West to look at the country in a year or so. He says that is the place for a poor man, where they raise one hundred bushels of corn to the acre, and watermelons grow as big as washtubs. He wants to take a colony out with him, and I told him he could count on us, for I'm determined to go. A man can't make a living here any longer, and I am about tired of it, and I propose to control this family from this on, and I want you to bear it in mind."

Without paying much attention to his father's western talk, Sydney proceeded to inform his mother of his plans, his approaching graduation, and his partnership with Doctor Kennedy, and when he had finished, he went up-stairs to bed.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## MARIAN'S CHEEKS ARE MADE TO TINGLE.



member of the family who looked upon her employment as a disgrace, should it ever become known. is true that the fact that others were in ignorance of it, afforded some consolation to Aunt Prudence, but it had a different effect upon Marian. She began to feel that she was acting an unworthy part, and for no good reason. Not on account of her work, but that she must act as if she was ashamed of it. And this seemed to rob her action of all the virtue it might possess. The constant care required, in order to preserve her incognito, became at last annoying to her. She often asked herself whether she was really doing something wrong, for this feeling seemed to be with her constantly, upon the days when it was necessary to go to the mill. She was deceiving Albert Howard and his family, and she felt quite certain that the knowledge of her secret would make a great difference to them. But the winter was over now, and there seemed no other way open than to continue upon the course she had begun. The grist mill, since its reconstruction, continued to yield its accustomed revenue, and with the aid of Marian's wages, and that coming from the butter and eggs, through Mrs. Jackson's kindness, they were enabled to live comfortably, without any financial troubles to press upon them.

Ned was in the city several days of each week, and during the winter saw his friend, Sydney Ransom, very often. He was very grateful for the opportunity he was enjoying in his music, and received warm praise from his new professor, who, like Carl Rother,

predicted that he would make his mark. In addition to his devoted mother's ability to meet his expenses, the resources of the family received quite an addition this winter, when Marian, one morning, drew one hundred dollars in gold from her pocket. Of course, this perversity of hers called forth the usual exclamations of wonder, and an increased desire to solve the strange family mystery. Although Marian was seriously troubled, because she could not understand it, together with the reports of the mystery now beginning to be circulated, it was no longer so difficult to accept these windfalls, since they had learned that no one had any better title to it than themselves. they used it at last, as they would have done any unclaimed property.

Albert Howard continued very attentive to Marian. She felt considerable resentment toward him, after he had exhibited his real feelings toward those he regarded as his social inferiors, and it caused some doubt and uncertainty in her mind about her true feelings towards him. And when Ned perceived something of this, he redoubled his efforts to encompass the defeat of Albert Howard. But Albert could be so pleasant, and was so devoted to her, and appeared so willing to be governed by her wishes and tastes, and seemed so contrite after he had recognized her displeasure, that she at length overlooked the offense; and having such an active ally in the family, in the person of Aunt Prudence, the rupture was averted, and the old relations were soon firmly es-

tablished again. In consequence, the preparations for the marriage that fall, were again taken into consideration.

But while Marian had known for more than a year that she was often the subject of unkind criticism, because of her lucky or peculiar method of finding money, she did not know the full force of the suspicions that were gradually assuming form, from this curious circumstance of her life. Nor was she aware that her affianced lover was at all perplexed or disturbed in mind about it, until one day in the early part of the summer of this year, when she was making her usual weekly visit to the mill. This afternoon she left her home and took the path through the woods, with a heart as light as she had felt for many a day. Her light hair was fluttering in response to the same gentle breezes that swayed the tops of the tallest trees of the forest. And so long as she must change her costume, and conceal the luxuriance of her hair, after she reached Mrs. Jackson's house, why should she be particular about it now? No one could refrain from expressing delight at the loveliness of nature's productions in the valley of the Wissahickon, upon beholding Marian Riverson, with no knowledge of the additional beauty lent the scene by her presence-for Marian was not vain-so she paused when she had gained the brow of the hill, and seating herself upon the trunk of a giant chestnut tree lying on the ground, looked with delight upon the beauties of nature about her. To-day, she thought she had never noticed before, the peculiar beauty of the dog-wood trees in full bloom, with their large white flowers, and which she could see through the openings in the woods, although they stood just below the dam.

Ah! surely her lines had fallen in pleasant places, in spite of the few trials and tribulations, she had often, in her bitterness, thought had come to her in larger measure than justice required. As she still lingered here she was carried back, unconsciously by her surroundings, to the early times when her grandfather was a boy. How different it must have been then! How few the neighbors and how many dangerous animals were then dwelling in these woods!

"Dear old Wissahickon! I could never live far away from your great bosom. Here all is peace; and when I am old, should sorrow come to me in distant lands, I will surely turn to thee before I die, and seek a grave in some secluded nook along your banks!"

But with a little start, Marian aroused herself from her reverie, and was not long in reaching Mrs. Jackson's house. That good lady was as demonstrative as ever, and just as anxious to talk as if she had not seen her dear young friend two or three days before. Marian succeeded however, in checking her speech, just as the almanacs were about to be introduced, when she retired to the bedroom to make the usual changes in her dress. As she came out of the room, she said: "If I had to deal with members of my own sex at the mill instead of men, don't you think they would have turned up their noses before this, at that shabby Miss

Whitby, who always wears the same clothes, with only two changes, one for winter, and one for summer?"

"Why, bless my soul, child, we never thought about that, did we? I declare that Miss Whitby will have to treat herself to a new rig very soon, and no mistake." answered Mrs. Jackson, laughingly.

"Oh, it is not necessary, Auntie. I am dealing with men, and they never know what a woman has on; at least, not unless she is young and pretty, and you know Miss Whitby is neither, so I will risk the present one awhile longer," and then Marian passed out the door and walked rapidly down the hill, with her face purposely averted from those she met. When she entered the large counting room of the mill Mr. Norcross was alone, and attended to her at once. Some few changes were necessary upon her rolls that week, so she seated herself at a table in a remote corner of the room, inside the desks and railing, with her back to the door, and nearly concealed from view by the desks. While she was engaged in this task, she soon became aware that Albert Howard had entered the room, and stood by the railing extending from Mr. Norcross's desk to the wall. Mr. Norcross saw by his manner that Albert wished to talk to him.

Not much of the conversation was lost to Marian, though she at first tried to concentrate her attention upon her work, so she would not hear, but to no purpose.

Mr. Norcross stepped up to the railing and said: "You haven't been very industrious for several days, Albert. Are you not well?"

"Oh, I suppose I am well enough, Norcross, but I'll be hanged if I can get my mind down to business just now."

"It isn't the spring races, too much betting, or any debt, is it?" inquired the confidential man of business.

"No. You don't come anywhere's near it, Norcross, I know you're pretty shrewd, but there are some things you old sober-sided fellows don't get hold of as easily as some other folks."

"I suppose I am growing old, Albert. But you know how the Judge questions me about the extent of your usefulness to the establishment, and I can't hoodwink him very long, if I was disposed to try," returned Mr. Norcross.

"Well, the fact is, I'm in trouble, Norcross, and am nearly pestered to death by thoughts I can't help, and —perhaps you can guess," turning inquiringly towards him.

"Perhaps I can by this time, Albert, for I haven't altogether forgotten the time when I was courting my wife; she, a wee young thing, and I, an awkward country lad," said Mr. Norcross, seeming to drop back into the past as he spoke. "May be I can advise you properly. If so, be sure that I will do so," he continued, proudly.

"Well, of course, you know of my engagement to Marian Riverson. You know also that she is hard to beat in this vicinity, for beauty and intelligence." Any one looking in the window near Miss Whitby's table, might have seen that lady's cheeks flush in an unaccountable manner at this moment. "And yet, with all this, there is something about her I can't make out, and the worst of it is, I can't obtain any satisfaction about it from any one."

Then Albert referred to the stories long in circulation, about Marian finding gold in such an unaccountable manner, and which Mr. Norcross had evidently heard before.

"Yes, I know all that, Albert, and so do most people who have any knowledge of the family. I won't pretend to deny that I think it an extraordinary phenomenon, indeed. And you say that neither she, nor any of her family, know any more about it than you do?"

"Yes, sir, that is what they all say. Of course, I haven't been very pressing about it, because you know I couldn't. But I have found out a few things, and have seen some of them myself, and deuced if I know what to make of it," said Albert.

"But I don't believe you could learn anything that was the least derogatory to Miss Marian," answered Mr. Norcross.

"Of course, I hope not, and I would be pretty angry if any one else should suggest such a possibility to me. But the fact is, I find she goes up through the woods back of our house, very often, and then seems to disappear somewhere near the toll-gate; and when you take that in connection with the money she can give no account of, you see what things a jealous fel-

low will think of, when he is head and ears in love with the girl, and the time for his marriage rapidly approaching."

"Why, my dear fellow, I'm inclined to think you are making a mountain out of a mole hill, and all jeal-ous lovers are apt to do that."

Kind and loyal Mr. Norcross, thought Miss Whitby, as she ceased to disfigure her pages by attempting to add columns of figures, while such a conversation was taking place within her hearing.

"Well, perhaps you are right, Norcross, but then I wanted to tell some one what I thought about it, and who else could I go to?"

"You ought to be able to go to your mother, young man. The more you confide in your parents, the better it will be for you. I suppose you did not wish to arouse the same thoughts in a woman, and especially in the prospective mother-in-law of the lady concerned," said Mr Norcross.

"You are right there, Norcross. Marian is too deuced fine a girl, to give up for a mere suspicion. Hanged if I won't be certain about it in some way though, and that before long."

Then Mr. Norcross returned to his books, while Albert walked out of the room, and in a short time after—so soon as she felt that she was able to control herself—Marian, or rather Miss Whitby, informed Mr. Norcross that her work was finished, and after receiving her pay, she left the mill.

As she hurried along Main Street, shame and anger

contended for the mastery within her, each in turn assuming control. Of what horrid things did her lover suspect her? Had she not told all there was to tell about her peculiar infirmity? It ought to be called that, since it had brought her more trouble than all the gold that came with it had ever been able to exorcise. When she saw Albert Howard again in her own proper character, wouldn't she tell him about it and end everything between them? Occasionally, tears came to her eyes as she walked along, and so pre-occupied was she in thinking of all these events, that she was not aware that some one was calling to her, until the wheels of a buggy grated against the curbstone near her. Then she looked up and saw Dr. Kennedy, . who was motioning to her to get in, seeing that she did not hear.

She was quite ready to open her heart to some one, and to whom could she do it with greater freedom than to this kind physician, who had known her all her life?

"What did you say was the matter, my dear?" asked the old Doctor in his kindest tone.

Little by little, the kind old man drew the whole story from the distressed and angry girl. After she had heard his expressions of sympathy, she felt some relief, and then she asked his advice.

"But listen to me a moment, my dear girl," said the Doctor. "Are vour affairs so prosperous now, that you are quite willing to give up the rather agreeable and somewhat exciting employment you now have?"

"Of course not, Doctor; but what has that to do with Miss Alice Whitby, so long as she discharges her duties well?"

"Everything, my dear! Bless me, how short-sighted these young people are with their lovers' quarrels and troubles! Don't you see that Albert Howard will know at once that he never mentioned this to any one but Mr. Norcross, for instance, and knowing that, will he not ask that gentleman whether any one could have been in the office that day to overhear them? And when Albert learns that Miss Whitby was there, will he not be interested in hunting down that elderly female?" looking at Marian with a merry twinkle in his eyes.

"Oh, dear! and to think that I never thought of that!" said Marian.

"Well, you see, it was very fortunate for you, my dear, that I happened along just as I did. Now, let me tell you what to do, and then ask your dear mother if my advice is not good. Always take your mother into your confidence, Marian, for you have one of a thousand."

"You know I always do that, Doctor; but I am anxious to hear your advice."

"Well then, just try and act toward Albert Howard as you have been doing. Do not intimate by word or deed to him the knowledge you possess, but keep a close watch upon him and yourself, in order that you may recognize anything suspicious. So long as he declared his affection for you to be as strong as ever,

it would hardly be the proper thing to break with him now, since you could, under the circumstances, give no good reason for doing so."

"I will try to do as you advise, Doctor, although I am afraid it will often be quite difficult. But will you never be able to give me any clue to this mystery about myself?" asked Marian with great earnestness.

Doctor Kennedy immediately looked grave, as though a difficult problem had been placed before him; but after a few moments' silence, he answered:

"I am afraid I have nothing to offer that will be very helpful, my dear. I have thought it might have some connection with your well-known sleep-walking propensities, but how to account for the money is altogether too much for me, and I might as well confess it. I have no patience with those wise people who never meet anything they can't explain; and then your windows are always fastened, and you are locked in your room, I believe?" he added.

"Yes indeed," she replied.

"Well, I am afraid I haven't helped you very much about that. But here we are! And now let me run in and see if the coast is clear, and then I will introduce you to your mother."

The Doctor soon returned with the information that Mrs. Riverson was alone in the sitting-room. Marian then accompanied him into the house, where the Doctor introduced her as Mrs. Church, a cousin, who was visiting him. Mrs. Riverson greeted the lady cordially, and conversed with her several minutes,

when the Doctor, unable longer to silently enjoy the affair, exclaimed:

"Come, Marian, this is enough! I guess no one will ever recognize you, if you can deceive your own mother!"

Then the dear lady could scarcely find words to express her astonishment, while Doctor Kennedy took his leave, first promising Marian to call at Mrs. Jackson's and tell her that no accident had befallen Miss Alice Whitby.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

#### DOCTOR SYDNEY RANSOM AND HIS FORTUNES.

HE next summer also brought its change in the fortunes of Sydney Ransom. He had graduated this spring with honors as high as

were accorded to any one entering the medical profession in those days, and returned to his native village, with bright anticipations. Dr. Kennedy received him with a great deal of cordiality and that evening, invited him to a private conference and astonished the newly-fledged physician by saying:

"Dr. Ransom, I am rapidly growing old. My hair has been silvered so long that my friends scarcely appreciate my age. The fact is, however, that I was seventy on my last birthday. I do not feel that ardor when I receive an urgent night call that I did ten or twenty years ago, and even this admission makes me sad." Here the Doctor paused, and for a few moments his eyes had that dreamy look so common to the aged, when recalling the past. "Yes, Sydney," he resumed, "the saddest thing to me is that we must leave this world and all our friends, without having been able to encompass the mystery of our existence. Now I wish to help you as well as myself, and so I have intended for a couple of years past to offer you a partnership when you had finished your preparatory studies; for that, my boy, is all that graduation ought to imply."

"You overwhelm me with kindness, Doctor Kennedy. I shall never be able to repay you, even in part, I fear," said Sydney with much feeling.

"Oh, yes, you will, Sydney. My patients will expect me to look after them as long as I live, and occasionally it is quite irksome to do so. When I have an active, ambitious young fellow like you, for a partner, I can turn over the hardest tasks to him, and by appearing once in awhile with you, it will be received well enough by the patient. You see, you will be doing me a favor. It will not be all upon my side, I assure you.

"I would trust anything to you, Doctor Kennedy, for I am not afraid of work," said Sydney.

In this way Doctor Ransom came to be associated with old Doctor Kennedy, and was very soon engaged

in visiting the sick in the surrounding country. The young doctor soon increased his practice. One after another of Doctor Kennedy's staunchest patrons gave him their confidence and support.

It was interesting to see the change in Mrs. Ransom, since her son had become a physician in good standing in the community. The position that the son was day by day gaining in the community, was reacting upon the mother. Long continued hard work and the practice of the strictest economy all her life. had unfitted her for the slightest attempt to influence or direct the conduct of others about her. Now, however, a change was noticeable. In fact, the whole family began to assume a tone quite foreign to it in the years that had passed, and the girls, sisters of Doctor Ransom, were now better dressed, and held their heads much higher, on account of their brother Nor was it long before all their friends came to look upon the new order of things as one to which they But with the father, Tom Ransom, were entitled. only a little change seemed possible. It appeared probable that he was to remain simply whining Tom Ransom, until he was called to pay the last debt to nature, and that was the only one he never could hope to evade. But although Tom Ransom clung to his previously expressed opinions, he did not hesitate to accept and make use of the money his son was so liberally giving them. Upon several occasions, however, Tom had been known to be quite willing, upon hearing something creditable to Doctof Ransom

alluded to, to call prompt attention to the fact that he was his son, in a very ludicrous manner.

No one congratulated Doctor Ransom upon his successful graduation and partnership with Doctor Kennedy more heartily, than did Ned Riverson, and he insisted that Sydney should pay a visit to Riverson's mill, without unnecessary delay. So it was not long after this that the two partners were obliged to pass Ned's home on their way to attend a patient, and upon their return, nothing was more natural than for Doctor Kennedy to visit his old friends. He simply rattled the door latch as he opened the side door and said: "It is only Doctor Kennedy and his new partner, ladies. Do not be afraid."

They received a hearty welcome, and the elderly physician did most of the talking, while Marian noticed that Doctor Ransom seemed unusually reserved.

When Doctor Kennedy noticed Sydney's distrait manner, he said: "You see, Marian, my young partner and your old friend is now a physician in active practice, and the levity which you used to associate with him is not sufficiently dignified for a member of our profession. I trust, therefore, that you will overlook it, and I will promise to make up for his deficiencies in this respect."

"But it does not seem too undignified for Doctor Kennedy. Perhaps you are so well pleased to think you have a partner," said Marian, laughingly.

"You are right, my dear. I do feel light-hearted

over it, if I am an old man. But there is one thing I always thought I would do, and that is, to continue to act, think and feel as the young and middle aged do, just as long as I live."

"We shall all hope that you may live long to look after us when we are sick, Doctor Kennedy," said Mrs. Riverson with a bright smile.

"You may be sure that the esteem is reciprocal on my part, Mrs. Riverson. I could hardly think more of this fair girl if she were my own daughter," turning to Marian affectionately, as he spoke, "and you must not be in too much of a hurry to get rid of her, either, ma'am, or I will see whether I cannot have something to say about it," he concluded.

Marian blushed a rosy red, and the Doctor, when he noticed that, hastened to change the current of their thoughts.

After the doctors had left, the ladies commented upon Sydney's grave demeanor, so different from that he had manifested when he was working for them, and even for the past few years. Marian also thought of it herself, and wondered whether she had failed to exhibit a proper interest in his successful graduation, and in the advantageous partnership he had formed with Doctor Kennedy, but she could not see any reason to reproach herself, and as she had to get ready to take a ride with her lover after tea, she soon dismissed the matter from her mind. Now, she was busy asking herself whether she could treat Albert as if she had not heard his allusions to herself,

made in confidence to Mr. Norcross. She thought it would have been impossible, if she had not heard him say that he loved her better than any girl he had ever known.

# CHAPTER XXIV.

DEACON MCCULLUM DECLARES HIS TENDER PASSION.



LBERT HOWARD called that evening to take Marian out riding, as he had promised, and she met him with such an excellent

counterfeit of her old manner that she at once abandoned her previous determination to plead a headache for an excuse. As she entered the parlor, dressed for her ride, her face glowing with the exercise of her preparations and the contending emotions within her, Albert thought she had never looked lovelier. It may be that Marian had purposely sought to make herself as attractive as possible this evening, with the idea that she could bring him into subjection, and possibly humiliation the easier, if he only possessed a sufficiently exalted idea of her beauty and worth. She must have felt satisfied with her womanly art, for when she stood before him in her white dress with its short waist, and the beautiful blue sash she had fastened around it, her lover was so impudent as to attempt a caress. But Marian was in no mood to respond to his acts of tenderness. Very cooly, and with a sparkle in her eyes, suggesting triumph, but which Albert did not understand, she drew back rather haughtily, and said:

"Albert, you forget yourself. I am no longer a child, that you should take such liberties. If you do not wish to offend me, do not do so again."

Albert seemed surprised, and looked curiously at her, while Marian avoided his glance. They were soon seated in the buggy, and started down the road leading to the turnpike. After they had proceeded a short distance, Albert turned to Marian and said:

"You never seemed so touchy as you are this evening, Marian. What is it, dear?" and again attempting to caress her, laboring under the idea he had formed, as to the cause of his previous repulse. But again Marian drew from him, and said:

"Do not be so foolish, I beg of you," with a show of indignation in her voice and manner.

For a little while the silence was profound, and meantime they were passing through the village called "The Falls." They had barely passed through the village when they saw Doctor Ransom approaching them. As they passed, Doctor Ransom politely, but gravely, raised his hat to Marian, who cordially acknowledged the courtesy. Albert looked rather glum, but only said:

"I suppose a fellow can't say anything without exciting your displeasure, even when we meet that stuck up young pill bags?"

"I think it would be as well not to say anything, if you can only make unkind and ungenerous remarks about me and my friends, Albert."

"Your friends? I wish you would not have such friends, Marian," returned Albert, earnestly.

"You ought to know, Albert Howard, that my brother's most intimate friend cannot be treated impolitely or unkindly by his sister. I hope you will not allude to the subject again."

Upon the drive home, for they turned about at Laurel Hill, Albert tried his best to interest Marian, by conversing with her upon several topics. But with the mood then upon her, his small talk palled. Why did this man take so little interest in the things that concerned her, and which even poor, musical Ned, knew something about? And when after several ineffectual attempts to find a subject of mutual interest, he broached the preparations for their marriage; the house and its oppointments, the horses and dogs, it was with difficulty Marian could refrain from quarreling with him. She did make an attempt to irritate him still farther, hoping that he might upbraid her with her well known infirmity, but he did not accept the challenge, and then she concluded that another opportunity might answer her purpose better. she had gone to her room that night, she sat a long time in deep thought. Whatever her subject was, or her conclusion, she did not give it utterance, but with a sigh that seemed an expression of grief for departed hopes, she retired to rest.

The good Deacon McCallum had always been a very friendly neighbor to the Riversons. But during the winter just passed, his visits had been more frequent than usual, and toward spring Marian called Ned's attention to the great improvement that had been effected in the Deacon's dress. Soon after this, the reckless Ned actually began to tease both his mother and his Aunt Prudence. Mrs. Riverson would only smile fondly at Ned, and tell him to cease his mischief, while Aunt Prudence tried to box his ears.

Deacon McCallum had for some time been considering seriously a certain question, and at last he concluded to ask the advice of his pastor and his wife. The following Sunday night he improved his opportunity, Mrs. Butler being present, while the children were in bed. The Deacon, with some hesitation, and only after a powerful blast upon his silk bandanna, which helped to conceal his confusion, began:

"My mother is growing old, Mrs. Butler, and she seems to be worried about her three boys, as to how we will get along after she is gone, none of us having married. And she has really worried me a great deal about it, and so I thought "—with much hesitation—" that a lady, and especially the wife of my pastor, might be capable of giving me excellent advice."

Mrs. Butler looked at her husband with a merry twinkle in her eyes, before replying, and then said:

"Of course a woman can tell you what to do under such circumstances, Deacon, and I must say that the

advice she gives you, is just what any mother might be expected to give her son. I think she is right. You ought to get married by all means. But much depends, as you know, upon making a proper selection. Now, if I only knew the lady you had in mind, I could advise you better, and, of course, you would not tell her, if I happened to think she was not suitable for you, Deacon?"

"No, indeed, Mrs. Butler, I will keep all that to myself. Well the fact is . . . . I have considered this question prayerfully, for sometime past, and at length it begins to look as though the Lord was concerned in it, for it has become strengthened in my mind, the more I have petitioned the throne of grace for light," said the Deacon solemnly.

"But the lady, Deacon?" asked Mrs. Butler, with much interest, her husband noticing by her eyes, that she was dangerously near laughter.

"Why, the fact is," replied the Deacon, beginning to wrap his bandanna into all sorts of fantastic forms, "that I have known our neighbors, the Riversons so long, that I have——"

"Oh, yes, I see," replied Mrs. Butler, unwilling to await the Deacon's slow speech, "you are thinking of the Widow Riverson. A most excellent choice, I assure you."

"No, ma'am, it wasn't the widow I had in mind, although I esteem her very highly indeed. It was Miss Prudence I was thinking of, and I will ask her, if you two friends think there will be no impropriety

in my doing so," looking at them very earnestly, as he finished.

Mr. Butler was now the first to reply. "I think you are now considering a duty you should have assumed long ago, Deacon. A man who is such a faithful follower of the Cross, as you are, could not fail to make some good woman happy, and you would be the better for it. I approve the project, and your choice. May God's blessing be upon you in this."

Mrs. Butler thought the widow would suit him the best, but if he could get Miss Prudence, she would no doubt make him a good wife. Thus comforted, the Deacon returned to his home, his mind fully made up to ascertain his fate at the earliest possible moment.

The very next evening he repaired to the Riverson home, and much to his satisfaction, found Prudence alone in the sitting-room, Mrs. Riverson being at a neighbor's not far away, while Marian was engaged with her work up-stairs.

The Deacon was really a little nervous, and as he was usually so self-possessed, Prudence noticed his manner with curiosity.

Deacon McCallum was really a warm-hearted man whose society any social person could enjoy once in awhile, but whose extreme piety would often worry one who was not an earnest disciple like himself.

Prudence told him of Mrs. Riverson's absence, and knowing that she was liable to return at any moment, he thought he had no time to lose, and became still more nervous in consequence. The poor man sat there trying his best to think over the situation rapidly, as one method of approaching the subject after another was rejected as unsuitable, he at last succeeded in doing nothing more important, than to wipe the perspiration from his excited brow.

After several vain attempts to speak, during which Prudence Riverson began to fear that the Deacon was laboring under one of his spells, he opened his delicate mission by remarking:

"Don't you think life is very uncertain, Miss Prudence?"

"I have every reason to think so, Deacon, whose father and brother were taken from me so suddenly," she answered.

"My mother believes she is not long for this world, and for the past year has been constantly reminding me of it," he continued, somewhat painfully.

"I hope it is not so bad as that, Deacon. I shall call and see the old lady, and try to get her out of that notion," rejoined Prudence, honestly interested in the old lady's welfare.

"I have no doubt that you could easily succeed in that, Miss Prudence, for she has always thought a great deal of you. I don't believe any one about here would be more likely to influence her in that way than yourself."

"I was not aware that your mother valued my friendship to that extent, Deacon," she answered, in-nocently.

"Oh, yes, she does, indeed. And then she is afraid that we boys will be left without the restraining influences of a home," and with this remark the Deacon heaved a sigh, and darted another tender glance toward Prudence. But that mature maiden had been out of school so long, she did not readily interpret the language of the heart, as expressed by the Deacon's eyes, so she continued cool and rather indifferent, though a trifle amused.

"What a mercy it is that we are still on praying grounds and interceding terms with Him, who made all things," remarked the Deacon, solemnly.

"Well, perhaps it is, Deacon, but the truth is, I have had so much to worry me in my life, that I have often been quite willing to try the realities of the unseen world, and not ask many questions about it, either."

"I am sorry to hear you confess such rebellious sentiments toward our Heavenly Father, who 'doeth all things well.' But no doubt it was because you were alone. Now, I am sure that Scripture is right when it says: 'It is not good for man to be alone,' and it is certainly quite as improper for woman to live alone. Rest assured, Prudence, that this is the ground of your insubordination," said the Deacon, with unction.

Prudence looked up at his last words, and a look of mingled mirth and disgust passed over her face.

"But I don't look at it in that way, Deacon. Nor do I think I am in open rebellion toward Him,"

"You say you have been worried and troubled, and I believed it is all because you have been alone in the world. We have both been direlict about obeying God's commands, Prudence. We have believed it was just as well for man and woman to live alone, and as a consequence we have been punished for our disobedience. But can we not beg forgiveness, and retrieve our sin?"

"I hardly see how, or just what you mean, Deacon," said she, coldly.

"Why... really, Prudence," now perspiring freely and being now in for it in earnest—" can't you see that... I have known... you too long, not to respect you much more than a neighbor, and that I would like to amend my life and yours, by our leading henceforth a life of righteousness and peace, and go down life's pathway hand in hand together. I would like to make you my wife. But please don't start and look at me that way! I would do any thing in the world for you that I could, and for my mother."

"Stop, Deacon, I beg of you," said Prudence, sternly. "I cannot listen to such language from you, although I do not wish to be unkind about it. I could not think for a moment of what you ask, and it might as well end now, for all time," she concluded.

The Deacon arose, and standing with his feet widely separated, he looked about him with a dazed expression. It was obvious that he was stunned by the blow of her refusal, but at last he found his voice.

"This will be a terrible blow to my mother, Miss Prudence, and I am also much cast down. Poor mother, I am afraid I will be unable to console her, you see, she had her heart so set upon this," said he sadly, and wiping the moisture from his brow with desperation. "We can at least be friends as we have been, can we not, Prudence?" asked the good old man, as he looked for his hat, evidently hearing some one approaching the house.

"Most certainly we can, Deacon, especially if you will promise never to refer to this subject again," said Prudence. And then the Deacon sorrowfully gave the required promise and took his leave, just as Mrs. Riverson entered the side door.

## CHAPTER XXV.

THE PARTY AT JUDGE HOWARD'S.

UDGE HOWARD was one of those hard, unsocial men, who had acquired wealth by the steady pursuit of a purpose, with which sentiment never interfered. Very exacting in all his dealings, he generally held himself aloof from his neighbors of the village, where his mill was situated, and sought only the society of wealthy gentlemen in the city. Occasionally he would unbend sufficiently to talk politics in an oracular manner with some of the neighbors living on the turnpike above him; for

this was a subject dear to his heart. His pro-slavery views were so pronounced, that the excitable Doctor Monroe had more than once suggested to him, that he ought to have his mill in the South, so he could use slave labor.

But Mrs. Howard, while she was also proud, was not inclined by nature to the same aristocratic seclusion that her husband enjoyed, She, poor woman, with all her wealth, pined for the society of her sex, and would attend the societies of the Baptist church of Roxborough, to which she had belonged for several years, although it was plain that she expected to be treated with the deference due her social position. Being thus more inclined than her husband to mingle with her neighbors, she was more likely to be influenced by her son, Albert, when he came to her this summer, and asked her influence with his father, in favor of their giving a grand party. He did not fail to point out to his mother that it even possessed its important aspects to his father, as little as he was inclined to such scenes of pleasure and association with his neighbors. And Albert also called attention to the unpopularity of his father, and which he believed was something of a thorn in the Judge's side, who never could be made to understand why he should not be loved and venerated by those about him. When Mrs. Howard mentioned the subject to her husband, and called his attention to their son's approaching marriage, and that people of their means were expected to honor such a forthcoming event by some social

courtesies to their neighbors, she was much gratified to see that he did not at once denounce it with violent language. It was an indication that he was giving it due consideration.

Judge Howard at once looked thoughtful, and began to walk up and down the large chamber they occupied, and after he had been thus engaged a few minutes, he turned toward his wife, and pausing in front of her, said:

"I am glad you mentioned this, Margaret. I have been urged to look over this district, and make my arrangements to run for Congress a couple of years hence. With this in view, I am sure it would be a good plan to cultivate our neighbors to the greatest possible extent. Of course, you will offer Albert's coming marriage as the excuse, for the other matter is as yet to be kept a secret. You and Albert can make the arrangements, and they should be commensurate with our position. In this instance I believe it will pay. Do not slight any worthy people, and I will furnish the money."

After conceding this much to his wife and son, because it happened to be entirely in the same line with one of his deep laid plans, he walked over to the railroad station near his home, and took the train for the city.

Mrs. Howard at once sought Albert, and they were soon busily engaged in preparing the list of those who should be invited to the party. Very naturally, under the circumstances, Albert hastened to Marian the next evening, to acquaint her with all they had done. But instead of the delight which he expected her to exhibit, she manifested no pleasure, although she did at least exert herself to appear somewhat interested in She was thinking of her position there as the expectant bride of Albert, and she was rapidly asking herself the question, whether she could go on with this engagement, and continue to act as though no change had come over her feelings toward the man she had promised to marry? And it is not unlikely that she was also thinking of the new dress she would certainly need for such an occasion as this, especially when it was to be in her honor, as Albert had confided to her. Then her mother, and Aunt Prudence, would be sure to need some additions to their wardrobe as well; and with the uncertainty that the expense, even of her own could be met, she could see nothing but trouble in store for her, when she was confidently expected to meet it with expressions of delight.

After some little effort on Marian's part to conceal this feeling of dread, Albert took a paper from his pocket and showed her the list of the guests. As they were arranged alphabetically, Marian rapidly ran them over, and soon discovered that, while the names of Doctor's Kennedy and Monroe were to be found there, that of Ransom did not appear. Then she knew that her lover persisted in his spite toward Doctor Ransom, notwithstanding that she had previously rebuked him for sneering at this old time friend of hers.

Fortunately for Marian's endurance, her lover did not remain with her very late this evening. He was so full of the coming event and its requirements, that he did not take full notice of Marian's forced enthusiasm. After he left her, she sat down in the parlor to think it all over. While thus engaged with her thoughts, her Aunt Prudence entered, having heard Albert leave the house and wondering why Marian did not go to her room.

"Oh, Aunt Prudence," said Marian, as she entered the room, "there is more financial trouble in store for us. I wonder if we shall ever be rid of that terrible bugbear?" Then she related to her aunt all that Albert had told her about the party, and how much she disliked the thought of it."

"Why, you silly girl, it is given in your honor, and as a preparation for your welcome into their family. You ought to be proud of it."

Marian shrank from informing her aunt about the change in her feelings, indeed she could not when the aunt was so ready to assume, that she was delighted with the matrimonial alliance, she had promised to contract.

So she simply answered:

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"But you have not thought of my dress yet, not to mention that of mamma or your own."

"That is a serious matter, when the state of our finances is taken into consideration, I must confess, Marian," returned her Aunt Prudence, coming to the realities of life very rapidly when reminded of the ex-

pense. "It will soon be time to pay off that mortgige, and where the money is to come from the Lord alone knows."

"What is it that depresses you to-night, Prudence?" asked Mrs. Riverson, who entered the parlor at that moment. Marian gave her all the particulars, and then the gentle, never-failing sunshine of her heart came out freely to comfort her relatives.

"I think I will be able to find twenty-five dollars for that purpose," said she cheerfully. "I have it laid away for a rainy day, and I presume this is quite as stormy as it is likely to be for us, until the mortgage comes due, Prudence."

"Yes, this party must be attended for Marian's sake," said Prudence. "And she must be dressed in a manner creditable to the promised bride of Judge Howard's son," she continued with evident pride. "As to that mortgage, I won't think much about it until the time comes. We can't do anything that I am aware of, and why should we worry about it? Come to think of it though, it is quite likely that Marian could get Albert to lend us the money after they are married," looking at her niece while speaking.

"Please don't think of anything like that, auntie, dear," said Marian, with a slight shiver, a look of weariness and disgust plainly depicted upon her handsome face. "I don't see how you could think of it. I should prefer to let the dear old mill go, than to base any hope upon such a contingency. There is no telling what may happen yet."

"Forgive me, dear," said her Aunt. I hardly meant what I said. Ned says he can pay it off by that time, but whoever heard of music paying off a mortgage? and fiddle-music at that?"

"We must go to bed now, Marian," said her mother.
"To-morrow we will see about your dress, and you can go to the city in a day or two and obtain the material."

The two weeks intervening were very busy ones for Marian, and also for her mother and Aunt Prudence. But this active discussion of dresses and visits and consultations with the mantua-makers, was not confined to the Riverson household! Every family of any social prominence along the Ridge Road, and in the village of Manayunk, had been similarly engaged; and copies of Godey's and Peterson's magazines were in demand.

The auspicious evening came at last and the weather was all that could be desired. Everything about the extensive grounds surrounding Judge Howard's mansion had been placed in still more perfect order for this brilliant occasion. The house was quite secluded from the passer-by on the turnpike, by the forest trees surrounding it.

Early in the evening Marian was in the large parlor in the Howard mansion with Albert and his father, awaiting the arrival of the guests, and Mrs. Riverson and Aunt Prudence were also present.

Judge Howard cast admiring glances at his future daughter-in-law, as he paced up and down the room

in his dignified manner, pausing now and then to address Marian or her mother with more than his usual urbanity. Marian's dress was of light pink crepe A cape passed gracefully over both shoulders to meet in a point upon the waist, partly covering the otherwise exposed shoulders and arms. This, as well as the front of the dress was trimmed with white tulle and roses. She never looked lovelier, and it was obvious to all, that her friends were proud of her beauty.

Mrs. Howard now entered the parlor, looking very stately in her magnificent black silk, trimmed with the best lace, and with a brilliant diamond brooch at Now the guests were arriving rapidly, and for more than an hour there was a constant inflowing stream of the beauty and fashion of that vicinity. Judge Howard and his wife received the guests at the end of their long parlor, and not far from them stood Albert and Marian. To be surrounded with so many evidences of wealth, as she was that evening, and beholding the glances of admiration cast upon her, as she moved about among the guests, was it any wonder that Marian thought of being thus surrounded for the rest of her life, with considerable pleasure? Nor was it perhaps strange that she lost sight for the time of her feelings of resentment toward Albert, for his expressions to Mr. She felt very much embarrassed when Albert presented Mr. Norcross to her, and she was conscious that both her face and her speech betrayed her

confusion, while she conversed with that gentleman and his wife.

Judge Howard had never been so affable before, and he did everything he could to please his guests. But from the day that Doctor Kennedy received his invitation, and learned at the same time that nearly every one had been invited but his young partner, he made up his mind to resent the slight to his friend, Howard, whose confidential medical adviser he had been for more than a quarter of a century. Later in the evening he obtained this opportunity, for he met his host in a corner of the hall, at that moment almost deserted.

"Now that I have cornered you, I will pick that little crow with you, Judge Howard," said the bluff, but good-natured physician.

"Why, you really don't mean to say you have one to pick with me, Doctor?" said the Judge, looking earnestly at his friend.

"I believe you know my young partner, Doctor Ransom, Judge Howard."

"Why, of course I do. He is Mrs. Ransom's son, isn't he? Tom has done many a job for me, and I have use for him again. Why do you ask that question?"

"You haven't seen him here to-night, have you?" inquired the Doctor.

"No, I think not. But I suppose he has to attend to the business, while you, the eldest member of the firm, attend to the social duties." "Not a bit of it, Judge. He wasn't invited, and principally for the reason, I make bold to say, that he is the son of old Tom Ransom, which you illustrated very well a few moments ago, when you spoke of him."

"The fact is, Doctor, that part of the business was in charge of Albert and his mother. I would not have permitted it, had I known anything about it. It must have been a mistake."

"No, that is not likely. The truth is, that Albert has taken a dislike to him, because he is Tom's son, perhaps. I like to help a man rise in the world who has it in him, and I determined that I would let you know what I thought of it. But I will accept your apology, if you say it was not your fault."

"It was not my fault, Doctor, I assure you, for I feel kindly toward any young physician you could take as a partner. But to tell him this, might only serve to intensify the feeling between the two. Do as you think best, however, and I will give Albert a severe reprimand to-morrow."

Judge Howard then passed on, and was soon talking to Mr. Grace, Mr. Butler and Mr. Sommers, all of whom thought it an excellent opportunity to enlist this wealthy man's interest in the cause of foreign missions, and they began at once to lead him skilfully in that direction. But the Judge soon spoiled Mr. Grace's enjoyment, by alluding to a previous talk they had upon missionary work, in a way that caused Mr. Grace to cough, and color up so perceptibly, that it

surprised the two clergymen very much. While they stood here, conversing together, a little party of ladies and gentlemen came so close to the group about the host, that he could not help hearing that they were discussing Miss Marian Riverson's peculiar faculty of finding gold. Several of the more elderly ladies were disposed to disbelieve what they had heard about her queer actions, and for their part thought there was something suspicious about it. Groups were talking together in all the rooms, as well as outside the house, and these ladies had no idea that Judge Howard was so near them. He overheard them, however, and in a very dignified manner he stopped his conversation with his friends, and turning toward the other group, said:

"Ladies, you will oblige me exceedingly, if you will refrain from such expressions about the young lady my son expects to marry. There is absolutely nothing in the matter you were speaking of, that she can explain, and why should she be blamed for it?"

Several ladies asked pardon for their thoughtless remarks, while the most of them slipped away, hoping they had not been recognized.

As the guests were assembling at the first table, Mr. Norcross happened to meet Albert, and said:

"Do you know, Albert, that ever since you introduced me to Miss Marian, I have been puzzling my brain by wondering where I could have met her, yet I am certain that I have never spoken to her before? Queer, isn't it?" "Why it's deuced queer Norcross, but then you know you'r a funny old fellow, and perhaps that will account for it?"

"Well, go on Albert, I won't detain you now," said Mr. Norcross, pleasantly.

Judge Howard and his wife were both exceedingly attentive to Marian. They sought every opportunity to make her acquainted with their friends, and the moment she left them, they were loud in praise of her beauty, and her possession of so many personal charms.

Aunt Prudence was delighted with it all, and once or twice during the evening she congratulated her sister-in-law, that Marian was to do so well. No doubt that young lady was very sensibly affected by the marked praise she received this evening, and it certainly did go far toward removing the unfavorable feelings she had lately entertained toward her lover.

After a series of festivities all the guests took their leave, declaring as they did so, that they had spent a very delightful evening.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE LADIES AID SOCIETY.

HE next regular meeting of the Ladies Aid Society, of the Roxborough church, was held during the week following the Howard

Nothing could have been more opportune than the sequence in time of these two events. This aid society had, for its principal object, the assistance of the heathen, among whom the self-sacrificing missionaries of their church were laboring. Numerous testimonials had already been received by these ladies. tending to establish the fact that their garments had reached the eastern and western coasts of Africa. One returned sailor had privately informed Mrs. Deacon Smith, that he had recognized one of their night garments upon a savage chief with whom they were trading, who used it as a robe of state on that occasion. Having seen her name upon one corner, together with that of his native village, had attracted his attention at once. This information was exceedingly gratifying to the ladies, whose warm hearts had throbbed with sympathy for the heathen, and more than one zealous worker had called attention to this providential testimony, as to the value of their selfsacrificing labors. Upon this afternoon the society

met at the house of Silas Riverson, whose wife and daughters, Lucy and Julia, had belonged to this church for years. There was a goodly attendance, and with plenty of work and much to talk about, a splendid meeting was promised.

Mrs. Silas Riverson was an elderly lady, who had managed her family for many years to perfection. At least, such was her own conviction, and that of her daughters, although the husband held a slightly different opinion.

After the ladies had their needles threaded, and had been provided with articles upon which to exercise their dexterous fingers, the conversation at once assumed a more interesting character.

"I suppose you enjoyed yourself at the party last week, Mrs. Riverson?" asked Mrs. Sommers, the wife of the pastor of the church.

"Why, yes, Mrs. Sommers, I think I may safely say that I did, for it was really a grand affair, and one that Mrs. Howard and her husband may well be proud of—how many buttons on that waist, did you ask, Mrs. Ellis? Just five, if you please. As I was saying, Mrs. Sommers, it was really a grand affair, but then, you know, there are occasions of that kind when one has to look at things which drive away all the pleasure you would otherwise derive from such a gathering." Mrs. Riverson accompanied her words with a sudden jerk of her head to one side, and looked knowingly toward her particular friend, Mrs. Digby, upon the other side of the room. Mrs. Sommers was a model

pastor's wife, and quite shrewd withal, and this telegraphic code was not wholly unknown to her.

"I was in hopes every one had thoroughly enjoyed the event," said she, continuing the subject. "Do you allude to anything in particular, Mrs. Riverson?"

"I did have something particular in my mind when I spoke, Mrs. Sommers, but then I guess it would bubest to say nothing about it. We are all apt to have some very unpleasant duties towards our own people, you know, and about which it is best to maintain silence."

"Oh, certainly, Mrs. Riverson. I recognize the fact that 'silence is golden.' I would not urge you to speak of it for anything," said Mrs. Sommers, in reply.

"It was that conceited Marian Riverson who spoiled ma's enjoyment of the party, Mrs. Sommers. I thought I would tell you, because ma never will say anything against that family, for it always makes pa angry when he hears it," said Miss Julia Riverson, rapidly, and with unusual interest.

"Julia Riverson, I am ashamed of you, to think you will go on in that way. If there is anything I despise, Mrs. Sommers, it is gossip, as I have often told your good husband. But as that foolish young girl has exposed me in this manner, perhaps I ought to say that I have been completely put out, wherever I have seen that girl, since it has been known that she is to marry Albert Howard. And as an honest confession is good for any one, I may as well say that her airs that night, completely disgusted me."

"There," said Julia, "you see what I told you was true, don't you?" simpering affectedly, as she challenged the contradiction of the assembly. But she "reckoned without her host," for Mrs. Ransom was seated in a corner, busily engaged with her work, and trying to avoid the incidental gossip of such societies. These remarks, however, were too strong to be passed over, and with her improved station in society and the church, which her son's efforts had undoubtedly given her, she looked up and said:

"Miss Julia, I have known Marian Riverson for many years, and to much better purpose than you, who are a relative, it seems; for I have never seen anything conceited about her. On the contrary, I have always found her in possession of a lovely disposition, and she has never said an unkind word of you or your family, to my knowledge. Don't you think it would be as well if you imitated her example?" asked Mrs. Ransom, rather sternly, as she concluded.

Miss Julia's rather faded face flushed red in a moment, and from her manner the next instant, it was obvious that she was no inexperienced maiden.

"Oh, it's easy enough to know why you are so ready to praise her to the skies, Mrs. Ransom. One doesn't have to look very far for the reason, either," said she, with a look of triumph at Mrs. Ransom.

"I can't understand your inuendoes, Julia, and they probably make very little differ nce to me," said that lady, as she resumed her sewing.

"Doctor Ransom was not at the party, was he?"

asked Julia of Mrs. Ransom, returning to the charge, and without waiting for an answer, continuing: "And doesn't every one know that it was because Albert Howard wouldn't invite him, being jealous of Sydney Ransom? For Albert Howard and many others know, that Doctor Ransom just worships Marian Riverson."

All the ladies looked up, much astonished at the tone of Julia Riverson's voice, and then they glanced at Mrs. Ransom, who was engaged in a struggle with her fiery temper, fearing, no doubt, that she might do or say something, that would bring discredit upon her son. And this fear helped her to control herself, much as she had been used to fighting wordy battles with her husband, during her married life.

"I insist that you have no right to make such a statement as that, Julia Riverson. He would have nothing to be ashamed of, the Lord knows, if he did think as much of Marian Riverson as you say he does," said Mrs. Ransom, with surprising self-command.

"Could you ever understand those stories about Marian Riverson finding money without being able to account for it, Mrs. Ransom?" asked Mrs. Ellis.

"Pshaw! Mrs. Ellis. Do you believe such non-sense as that?" said Mrs. Riverson.

"There seems to be no reasonable excuse for wholly disbelieving the stories, I should think, Mrs. Riverson, judging from what I have heard," remarked Mrs. Sommers, quietly.

"Well, then you have heard the best side of it.

The truth is, the story got out before they knew it. and then it couldn't be stopped. The fact is it looks more serious, the closer it is examined. I know she goes away from home every few days, and where she goes to no one seems to know, for if you happen to be at the house at such times, the family won't tell you. I know also that they haven't any too much money! The old Colonel left them in the lurch somehow or other, at least that's what my husband says, and yet Prudence—the proud creature—would actually tell you a falsehood rather than admit it. And I say, that when you consider the actions of the girl, and hear such stories set afloat to account for the money she could hardly come by honestly under the circumstances, they must think people are pretty dumb, if they expect anybody to believe their stories!"

"Indeed, ladies, I do not approve of this tattle," said Mrs. Sommers.

"For my part I don't see that Colonel Riverson's family is any better than mine, though I haven't the least thing against them," said Mrs. Smith, who had not taken much part in the conversation before. "But I would like to know what the Howard's think about their son marrying a girl who can't explain her conduct any better than she can?"

"Why you might have known what Judge Howard thinks about it, if you had heard him stop some of us talking about it the night of the party," said Mrs. Riverson suddenly, and the next moment realizing that she had unnecessarily exposed herself, hastening to

explain: "That is—I was told he—did so.... and was quite put out about it."

"I agree with you, Mrs. Sommers, that we are tattling entirely too much," said Mrs. Johnson. "Still, I must say that Colonel Riverson's family has acted strangely ever since the death of the Colonel and his son. And I am bound to say, that I regard Marian's proceedings with a great deal of suspicion. It grieves me to think of her in this way, but there is really no help for it. Can't you exert some influence upon her as a relative, Mrs. Riverson?" appealing to that lady.

"Why, she wouldn't listen to me a moment, the stuck up minx. Neither would her Aunt Prudence, for she got angry at Silas many years ago, when she was a girl, because he told her some truths, and she has never forgiven him. He didn't want to tell her, but I knew it was his duty, and at last he consented; and would you believe it? he has thrown it at me ever since," concluded Mrs. Riverson, with an aggrieved voice.

Nearly all the ladies had something to say about the mystery surrounding Miss Marian Riverson before the society adjourned. They were not all disposed to attribute it to any improper conduct of hers, although those who stood ready to think the worst of her, had the most to say about it.

Mrs. Ransom defended her vehemently, and would never have given up the conflict so easily, had not Miss Julia struck her so closely by the allusion to her son's infatuation for Marian. That made it impossible for her to take a very active part in the controversy, after that. She knew very well it would mortify her son exceedingly, to have his silent devotion proclaimed in a ladies' sewing-society.

A day or two after the meeting, Mrs. Sommers called upon Mrs. Howard. After consulting with her husband, they concluded that Mrs. Howard ought to know that such remarks were being made about the lady who was expected to become her daughter-in-law.

Mrs. Howard was proud, and yet, after going all over the matter with Mrs. Sommers, who really sympathized with her and the young girl involved, they both found it so difficult to explain, that they ended by entertaining the possibility of some double dealing on the part of Marian and her family.

When Albert returned home that evening, his mother sought him at once, and related to him all she had heard about Marian.

"Confound the gossips," exclaimed Albert, indignantly. "I didn't suppose there was so much talk about it, but it is a deuced queer story; and Marian is inclined to get angry whenever I ask her anything about it. All she will say is, that I can understand it as well as she can. But that don't help me a bit, because I can't understand it at all," said Albert, vexatiously.

"It is very clear to me, Albert," said his mother, with dignity, "that something ought to be done to silence these busy tongues before you are married. The honor of our family demands it."

"Perhaps you can tell me what to do about it?" said Albert. "I can't say that it is perfectly clear to me how I shall proceed."

"Well, I would advise you to probe this to the bottom, and the sooner the better. How to do so, I won't pretend to say; but you are the interested party, and can certainly devise some plan. Your father told me he caught some ladies talking about it the night of the party, and rebuked them for it; but for all that, it vexes him to think such stories are circulated about her. But you must be careful not to hurt her feelings, or those of her mother and Aunt, for your father regards Marian highly, and only dislikes this mystery."

"I thought the governor was always a bit spooney over Marian, and I was glad to see it. But, egad, mother, I could not stand it to have a wife who had any kind of a scandal connected with her. Yes, I will look after it right off. I'll put on my thinking cap and see what I can do," striking a match and lighting his cigar with a nonchalant air, as he spoke.

# CHAPTER XXVII.

#### ALBERT HOWARD HAS BUSINESS WITH TOM RANSOM.



S Albert Howard puffed away at his cigar, he thought over in every conceivable way the subject his mother had mentioned to him so

earnestly. If the silly gossips were talking about Marian in this manner, and had already suspected her of various imprudent actions, was it any wonder that he had been troubled about it, and had been moved to confide in Mr. Norcross? If Marian knows nothing about this affair, who the deuce does? he argued. I can't ask her anything more about it without having a rupture, that is certain.

"By Jove, that is a poser," he exclaimed aloud, cutting a passage through the thick cloud of tobacco smoke; then continuing his cogitations he thought it necessary to know just where she went for a couple of weeks or more. But could he ascertain this without employing a detective? Then if there should be nothing in this after all, a fellow would hardly like to have a detective know that he had married a lady that he suspected. No, that would never do! Then it was that he thought of poor Tom Ransom, who had always

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cherished such subservient feelings toward the wealthy, that Albert thought he could do exactly what he required, and exclaimed aloud once more: "Just the thing, by George, and I will hunt him up at once."

But by the time he had ordered his horse and buggy, and had turned his head up the Ridge instead of going down to Manayunk, he had changed his mind about interviewing Ransom at his own house.

He remembered Mrs. Ransom, and her energy and strong will made him fear that Tom could not successfully keep the secret, if his wife knew there was any unusual business going on between them. He therefore concluded to invite Tom to a conference at his house that evening.

That evening, according to the appointment made, Tom Ransom presented himself at the Howard mansion.

So by appointment that evening Tom Ransom was on hand promptly. He stopped first at the barn ostensibly to look at the horses, and there he carelessly asked if Albert was about the place. The hostler went to the house, and returned with Albert, who in showing Tom the horses, made an excuse to lead him to one side of the extensive grounds.

There they sat down in a summer house, where they were quite safe from interruption or from eaves-droppers.

"I think you know that I am engaged to Marian Riverson, Tom?" said Albert by way of introduction. Tom nodded in response.

"As you know most everything that is going on about these hills," continued Albert, "I guess you have also heard some pretty queer stories about her during the past year."

Again Tom nodded.

"You see, Tom, that to pick up money, as they say she does, never knowing where she gets it or anything about it, is, to say the least, a mighty strange story. How long ago did you know of this, Tom?" Albert asked.

"Why, I first heard of it when Sydney worked for the family. May be it was a year or more before he left there."

"What did he say about it?"

"We were all pretty much surprised over it, you may be sure. We naturally expected Sydney to know more than the rest of us, that at least he would have some theory about it. And when he said he didn't, and that Marian herself didn't seem to know anything about it, I just set it down as a young woman's curious freak, and never took much stock in it," said Mr. Ransom, deliberately.

"There's one thing I must mention, Ransom," said Albert, "and it is about that son of yours. Now the fact is, I don't get along with him very well, for I think he has tried to meddle with my affairs, which shouldn't concern him. The only fear I had about this job was, that he might get hold of it in some way and spoil my plans. I believe the fellow is in love with Marian himself, and has been for years!"

Here Tom Ransom looked up with much astonishment at his companion, before he replied.

"I don't believe Sydney has been such a fool as that, Albert, though I will admit that he has been tending in that direction the past few years. But I don't believe he thought of Marian Riverson in that way. No sir! And don't you suppose that I am master in my own house?"

"Indeed, Tom, I didn't believe you could be wheedled by that son of yours, if he is a doctor, and thinks himself pretty smart. I never like to see a young cub get so wise, that he thinks he knows more than his father, and I have heard that you two don't get along the best in the world either?"

"That's just the way of it exactly," remarked Mr. Ransom. "You see, since he is a doctor, and has been taken into partnership by Doctor Kennedy, it has kinder set up the old woman too, and I can hardly do anything with 'em. I want to move West, but the whole of 'em is against me on that point, and so it goes," he concluded, very despondently.

"Well, Tom, I think I can depend upon you, and so I wan't to tell you now what you are to do. Remember that I am engaged to marry Marian, and that I think she is a mighty fine girl; but I must find out about this matter, and it must be done quietly. I don't pretend to say there's anything wrong about her, but if there should possibly be, a man had better find it out before he's tied to a woman for life. You see if she should happen to meet you nearly every time

she went out, it would not surprise her very much; but if she met a stranger that often, she would soon begin to suspect that he was watching her."

"I think I begin to see through it sir," remarked Mr. Ransom.

"It should not be a very hard problem to solve after all I have said. I thought if you could be around on the hill, so you could see the house the entire day, you would be ready to follow her if she started to ride or walk, and would then be able to tell where she went. If you will keep this up for a couple of weeks, we can't help knowing where she goes, and all about this mystery," said Albert.

"That's about the way these here detectives does. I've read about some cute ones in my time, and I've always thought I could do a job of that kind if it was put in my way. I'll bet I will find it, if there's anything to find; which there mayen't be as you just said," said Tom.

"That is just the reason why you must never let a single soul know what you are at, or that I hired you to do this," returned Albert. "It wouldn't be pleasant for a man to have it come out after he was married, that he had hired some one to dog his wife's footsteps, to see if he could learn anything discreditable about her? You can see that well enough, Tom?"

"You bet I can, and there'll be no flash in the pan about this; for I believe you will pay pretty well for a job of this kind?" looking at Albert inquiringly.

The pay will be left to you, Tom. Anything in rea-

son, and I won't say a word; and as it usually helps a man in his work, here's a ten-dollar gold piece to begin with," said he, placing a coin in Ransom's hand.

Tom's eyes opened widely, and it at once occurred to him that he might make enough money to take a trip to the West, and see the promised land once, before he laid himself down to die.

"If you should learn anything, Tom, come to me in the evening, and tell me about it. Now I think you understand it all well enough, so good night, and good luck to you; though I hope you won't find anything, Tom," said Albert, as he arose and walked toward the house.

"Well, I'll be switched," said Tom to himself. "I'm in luck for once, that's certain, and this is my chance for the West," and with these and similar reflections Mr. Ransom betook himself to the turnpike.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

MARIAN'S COGITATIONS AND MRS. RIVERSON'S ILLNESS.



HILE many a young girl belonging to a family whose position was all that wealth could bestow, would have eagerly accepted Albert

Howard as a husband, and would have looked forward to a union with his family with pride, even as something of a social triumph, these were not the thoughts of Marian Riverson. She had never mingled to any extent with the best society in Philadelphia in those days, for several reasons. While the family name was fully as honorable and aristocratic as the best, and was not likely to lower its escutcheon while under the direction of Prudence, her grandfather, had he lived, was not one to encourage the usages and extravagances of polite society. Since his death, their financial condition had been too precarious for them to think of it.

But as for Marian, even since she overheard Albert's conversation with Mr. Norcross, she had found it very uncongenial to accept Albert's attentions as she had previously done. The party at Judge Howard's had only arrested temporarily the progress of the

searching examination she was now making of her own heart. Her aunt knew of her embarrassment, and the change that had taken place in her feelings toward Albert. She had done all that a respected relative could do with one of her sex, to point out to her the folly of listening to her heart in this matter, apparently unwilling to admit, from any experience of her own, that the heart will not always obey the dictates of the judgment. She also pointed out the fate that was in store for them in another year, even by the coming spring, when the mortgage would be due, should this marriage with Albert not be consummated. Nor did she fail to make use of every powerful argument she thought would influence the action of her niece, in order to gain her consent to continue, and at last, fulfill the engagement.

Mrs. Riverson, as good natured as ever, had seconded the efforts of Prudence to influence Marian. But the mother's requests and methods were entirely different from those of her aunt.

Of course, Marian could see and feel the force of the suggestion made by her Aunt Prudence about the approaching maturity of the mortgage. And if the above rather sordid considerations were not enough to make the poor girl hesitate about following her own inclinations and rupturing her engagement with Albert, there still remained a more powerful one, to which an affectionate daughter could not close her eyes.

It was becoming apparent to all her family, that

Mrs. Riverson was not very well. Having, while young, a robust and pleasing form, she had always been equal to every burden that had fallen upon her, and her beautiful disposition had led her to assume an undue portion of the household duties, until her power to perform had become so great, nothing seemed too severe for her to undergo.

Aunt Betsey expressed her mind freely upon this point, when she said: "Poor Mary is the slave of this family. But such cheerful and uncomplaining slaves are only to be met occasionally. Prudence might sit down with folded hands and bewail the condition of their affairs, but Mrs. Riverson worked from morning until night at anything there might be to do, or that at least promised to benefit any member of the family. Since Marian had been working for the mill, and had in this way contributed to the resources of the family, she was not so much to blame for her apparent indifference to the multiplicity of her mother's duties. But for Ned and Aunt Prudence, no such excuse could be offered. Prudence had never been an energetic domestic worker before her father's death. and she had become so used to that life, it was not easy for her to change. But Marian did, however, awaken to her responsibilities at last, and sought to arouse Ned and her Aunt Prudence. It was difficult with Ned, much as he loved his mother, for he could not believe that she was really ill; perhaps because he did not wish to, nor was it easy to make Aunt Prudence believe it was anything important.

But after Marian had insisted upon consulting Doctor Kennedy, and they had all heard his report of her condition, they began to realize what she was to them, and how selfish they had all been, to permit her thus to waste her strength in their service.

Doctor Kennedy told them how the slight affection of the heart, he had hoped a year or two before was only a simple functional disturbance, caused by a stomach trouble, had really proved to be a more serious matter, that one of the valves of the heart was not quite so competent to do its work, as was consistent with perfect health. For this reason, they must in the future so arrange matters, that the heavy work would not fall to her lot. Her occasional weariness. hitherto so unusual to her, and her slight pain in the chest, with the difficult breathing upon going up stairs or up a hill, were all caused by this defect of that great central organ. "And, my dear girl," said the Doctor, in conclusion, when he was telling Marian and her aunt the result of his thorough examination, "if you wish to retain your sainted mother with you yet a few years, you must see to it that her tasks are at once made lighter."

"Why, Doctor, we would do anything to save our dear mother," said Marian, through her tears, and even Prudence Riverson was startled by the idea that her sister-in-law might be taken from them.

"I am certain of that, Marian, my dear, or I never could have thought as much of you as I have. I have once or twice in the past two years been tempted to speak of this to you, but knowing your trials, and fearing even with my oldest friends, to do anything that savors of meddling, I kept putting it off, and now I wish you would box my old ears because I did not do so long ago."

"It would have been better, Doctor, if you had given us some hint of this earlier," said Prudence.

"No one can deplore that more than I do at present; but I will do all in my power to atone for the error. And now I must leave you, but I will see your mother again, Marian, and I have no doubt she will soon be better; perhaps will insist that she never felt better. But you must not believe all that she says about her health and strength. And if I see that big musical brother of yours, I will talk to him like a Pennsylvania Dutch Uncle," with which bit of pleasantry the old family physician left them.

Marian had, a few months before this, succeeded in securing a higher salary from Mr. Norcross, but with it came an increase of work, which required a still larger share of her time. This in turn gave her less time to assist her dear mother, now that her loving heart was more willing than ever before to lighten all her burdens. Even Prudence had taken the admonition of Doctor Kennedy kindly, and was already taking a large share of the work from the unwilling hands of her sister-in-law.

Doctor Kennedy brought his partner to see Mrs. Riverson, who also examined her carefully, and coincided in the view his elder colleague had taken of her

case. No one could have been more considerate for the feelings of a young physician who had once worked in a menial capacity for her husband, than Mrs. Riverson was of Doctor Ransom, during this professional interview. She encouraged him by many expressions of her entire confidence in him, and concluded, by inviting him to visit her professionally, whenever Doctor Kennedy could not easily do so.

But when Doctor Ransom met her daughter Marian, his face tingled with shame, at the thought of Miss Julia Riverson's spiteful statement at the Aid Society, and how he had heard it, his mother having considerately sought to withhold it from him.

Marian had no doubt heard it also; but she at least gave no sign of any such knowledge, and wondered why Doctor Ransom should be so awkward and silent, when she was present. He made very few attempts to converse with her, and then divining the cause of his confusion, perhaps, she wisely absented herself from the room.

The greater care of the house that Prudence Riverson now took upon herself, was of some benefit to her, as well as to the invalid they were thus attempting to relieve; for her mind was not so constantly engaged in considering the great uncertainties concerning the mortgage, due in the spring. But her work could not drive such thoughts entirely from her mind.

Where the money was to come from she could not see. Nor were Marian and Ned able to help her solve this problem. And only this season they had lost

some more rent from the mill, through the failure of Mr. Bean, the lessee, to continue its profitable operation, on account of sickness in his family; and thus two months of idleness and loss to them ensued, before they secured another tenant. During this period, Mrs. Riverson was very hard to manage. She had always taken trouble of this kind so easily, before, when all the others were wont to worry, that Prudence was astonished when she refused to be nursed and coddled any longer by the family. She knew the value of her work and its necessity to the family, at this juncture, for she had never informed Prudence about the butter, cheese, and eggs, from the sale of which the family had derived so much substantial aid, and just when they needed a larger income, they found it much decreased, by the stopping of the mill.

It is true Ned was now playing in the city, and his natural talent was beginning to receive that recognization it deserved; being promised the position of director of a large orchestra about to be organized.

With the additional salary he would receive from that source, he was confident of his ability to add many essential comforts to their frugal lives. Not the least among their real needs was a new carriage. When spring should come again Mrs. Riverson would need plenty of fresh air, nor could she walk to obtain it.

The old carriage was so shabby it was impossible for them to think of using it much longer. What would be thought of them if they continued to present such a spectacle when they went abroad? Something must be done about it, Prudence very stoutly asserted.

Now, as often before, whenever troubles came trooping upon them, Marian was the most certain to find more gold in her pocket, and was obliged to give the same old explanation to her family, so unsatisfactory to them and to her. But there was at least some philosophy in its reception by her mother, who simply said:

"It really looks, Prudence, as if the good Lord sent it to us, for it always comes when we seem to need it the most."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## NED RIVERSON'S CONCERT.

OT many days later. a carriage, drawn by two prancing bays, driven by a well dressed colored man, was seen to turn north from the turnpike and to follow the Wisahickon, under the great railroad bridge that spans the stream at this point. One who had ever known Mr. Lorgan, would not have failed to recognize him as he drove along this beautiful October afternoon, pointing out to the wife at his side the gems of that autumnal landscape. His wife was so charmed with the beauties on every hand, that Mr. Lorgan found it difficult to satisfy her with

his explanations. It was not her first visit to the Wissahickon, even then noted for romantic drives and scenery, and one peculiarity, they both admitted this charming region possessed, was, that you never could visit it, without seeing new objects of beauty, unnoticed at one's previous visit. They were chatting together about the Riverson's, whose house and mill they were rapidly approaching, and as they drew in sight of the house, Mr. Lorgan leaned forward and directed his coachman where to stop. They had alighted and were passing through the front gate, when Marian observed them from the parlor, and went out to meet them. Marian greeted the banker and his wife very warmly.

"To this lovely weather, Miss Marian, and the desire of my wife to see, and to become acquainted with your family, are you principally indebted for this visit," said Mr. Lorgan, as they all seated themselves.

"It certainly gives me much pleasure to see you, Mr. Lorgan," answered Marian.

"I hope your mother and Miss Prudence are at home, Miss Marian. I suppose it is not likely that I am to have the pleasure of meeting Miss Claybank again this afternoon?"

"No, sir," answered Marian. laughing softly. "I am very sorry Aunt Betsey—as we call her—is not here. She will be disappointed when she learns of your visit. If you will excuse me a moment, I will tell mamma and Aunt Prudence that you are here."

In a few moments she returned with her mother and

aunt, who were introduced to Mrs. Lorgan, and it was obvious in a very short time, that the ladies were mutually pleased with each other.

"What a lovely place to live, Mrs. Riverson," exclaimed Mrs. Lorgan. "I think I should never tire of driving and walking along this stream, with an occasional ramble over the hills to some of the adjoining farms and woodlands. And what a delightfully quaint old mill that is. I must ask you to show me through it before we return to the city, if it will not be too much trouble."

"We are so accustomed to it, and have had so much trouble in connection with it one way or another, that I am afraid we cannot see or enjoy its beauties as you, a stranger and a visitor, can," said Prudence. "But we will show you through the mill with much pleasure, I am sure," she hastened to add.

"I hope it will give you nothing but happiness in the future, Miss Riverson," said Mrs. Lorgan, "for anything so full of memories of the past, and whose interior and exterior recalls so many scenes of interest to those who were near and dear to you, but whose voices are now hushed forever, ought to bring the whole line of your ancestors, from William Penn down to the present, before you. To me there would be a sense of rest and peace, within the noisy old mill. Within its walls I could see, and feel, the dead past, coming to meet the living present."

"You must come often now you have made our acquaintance, Mrs. Lorgan. It would give us great

pleasure to have you come out in the morning and remain the entire day with us," said Mrs. Riverson, earnestly.

"That will suit my wife only too well, I fear, Mrs. Riverson. She will accept your kind invitation with pleasure. Pray excuse the delay Mrs. Riverson, for I had not forgotten it, but I wish to know about your health. My good friend, Doctor Monroe, told me a short time ago, that you were not well, though as he was not your physician he could not give me any particulars," said Mr. Lorgan.

"I think I had better answer that question, Mr. Lorgan," said Marian, interrupting her mother, who was about to answer Mr. Lorgan.

"Now Marian, dear, do not be so foolish about me," the gentle soul succeeded in interpolating by this time. "I have had a little trouble with my heart," Mr. Logan, but indeed, it is of no consequence, and yet they have taken the reins out of my hands almost entirely, since the Doctor told them to do so."

"Which was highly proper, Mrs. Riverson. You must not be imprudent. Your daughter and your son, and we, your friends, as well, wish you to live as long as possible," said Mr. Lorgan.

"Every one has been so kind to me all my life, and I have had so much pleasure in life, that I would be a very strange creature if I did not desire to live as long as possible, Mr. Lorgan."

"That is just the opposite to my experience in life," said Prudence, with a little of her usual snap and

acerbity. "Some have been kind to me, while many have been unkind, and troubles have come to me more frequently than I ever deserved."

"Trust to the future, Miss Riverson, There lies the great opportunity to have our wrongs righted, though we may be overwhelmed with difficulties, if we will only continue to use the faculties our Heavenly Father has given us, the tide will surely turn at last and bear us on to victory. It is the fainting souls, who fall by the way and are lost. I do not take you for one of that character," said Mr. Lorgan. "And," he resumed, "believe me when I say, that I should be glad if you would give me an opportunity to show my friendship if any trouble comes to you in the future. I have my reasons for this interest in your welfare, that circumstances will not permit me to disclose at this time. I am unable to satisfy myself upon a certain point, and I hope to make myself better understood sometime in the future. Miss Riverson. In the meantime please remember what I have said. I should not like it, if you refused to accept my assistance.

"You are strangely kind, Mr. Lorgan. It might be presumptious, and look like sneering in the face of Providence, for placing such a willing and powerful friend in our way. I am afraid we shall need the friendly assistance very badly next spring, Mr. Lorgan, and perhaps we will avail ourselves of your great kindness," answered Prudence.

"I must insist that you bear it in mind, Miss Riverson," said Mr. Lorgan, who then looked out of the window and soon became lost to those about him. Suddenly he exclaimed: "If they only had a pertrait?" and then looking up and remembering the place and his surroundings, he endeavored to recover his presence of mind, but not altogether with success.

"Did you ask a question, Mr. Lorgan?" asked Mrs. Riverson.

"No... ma'am, not... exactly, and yet I meant, how much I wished that you possessed a portrait of Colonel Riverson, and unintentionally expressed it. You have nothing of the kind I believe, Miss Riverson," turning to Prudence, as he asked the question.

"Unfortunately for us we have not, Mr. Lorgan, and we have often regretted it. This daguerreotype of my brother John is all we have. As he resembled his father very much, perhaps it would interest you to see it Mr. Lorgan," said Prudence.

Mr. Lorgan was soon lost in contemplation of the picture. This time he did not speak out loud, but Marian who sat nearest to him, was sure she heard him remark softly, while the others were conversing together: "I believe I am on the right track, but how to prove it, is the question."

These words of Mr. Lorgan and his strange interest, naturally excited much curiosity on Marian's part, especially as she had been surrounded by a veil of m stery that she had been unable to penetrate; and she thought it over very rapidly now, surrounded as she was by these friends.

"Is your brother Ned at home this afternoon, Miss

Marian?" asked Mr. Lorgan. "No sir, he is in the city. He is very busy practicing his orchestra for the concert he is to give in a couple of weeks, and has not been home for the last three days," replied Marian.

"I wished to see him, and yet I hardly expected that he would be at home. But a part of our mission to-day, was to invite your family to come to our house the afternoon of the concert, and remain with us over night. It will hardly be possible for your mother to enjoy the concert unless she will accept our invitation, for we cannot doubt her desire to be present upon that auspicious commencement of her son's musical career. I hope you will consent to come, Mrs. Riverson. It will not tax your strength too much if it is managed in this way, and we shall be delighted to have you with us, including Ned, if he can be induced to join us at tea," said Mr. Lorgan.

Before Mrs. Riverson or Aunt Prudence could reply, Mrs. Lorgan had warmly seconded her husband's kind invitation. Mrs. Riverson looked at Prudence, in a manner that clearly authorized her to answer as she thought best, and she at once accepted the duty.

"We hardly know how to thank you sufficiently for your kind invitation, Mr. Lorgan," said Prudence Riverson. "I think it would be too great a tax upon your kindness, to accept your invitation. Pray excuse us," said she, with dignity.

"Miss Riverson, I am well acquainted with all the customs and conventionalities of polite society, but

one that I do not practice, is to invite to my house those, whose society I do not desire. I hope you will believe that we wish you to accept onr invitation, and we shall be offended if you refuse us," said Mr. Lorgan.

Prudence glance? at her sister-in-law and niece before replying again, and observing their signals of acquiescence, she resumed:

"Our only fear is that of intruding upon you, Mr. Lorgan, but as you insist, we will not disappoint you judging from the appearance of assent my relative seem to give."

"We shall be glad to visit you, Mr. Lorgan," said Mrs. Riverson, to which Marian hastened to add her own acceptance and pleasure. Then Marian conducted Mrs. Lorgan through the old mill.

Social courtesies, such as Mr. and Mrs. Lorgan extended to the Riverson family, are very agreeable to those who are able to get along without them.

To those possessing equal wealth and social distinction, always ready to provide a new toilette for the ladies of the family, such invitations are received with pleasure, and as a part of the really good things of life that belong to their station.

But when the worry of providing suitable costumes, far exceeds the pleasure, they only accept them with groanings unutterable, rather than with feelings of joyful anticipation. Marian was anxious to accept the invitation. She had taken a fancy to Mrs. Lorgan, whose admiration for this somewhat secluded beauty of

the Wissahickon, was too plainly expressed by looks to be misunderstood. When Ned returned home and was informed of the invitation, he was delighted. No thought of what he should wear disturbed the mind of this gifted musician. Far weightier matters demanded his attention.

Would each one of the clever artists composing his orchestra, obey promptly every movement of his. baton, and interpret as well, his varying moods, as a guide to the expression he demanded of them.

A man does not often worry over dress, but Ned soon recognized the troubles of his sister, and generously gave her a portion of his lately received salary, to aid her in the proper adornment of her person.

He wished to know if Albert Howard intended to escort her to the hall, and having learned that such was his intention, he did not interest himself in the family preparations much further.

Nothing could have been more propitious than the day selected for the grand concert.

In the afternoon the three ladies took the train to the city, and found Mr. Lorgan's carriage awaiting them.

Mrs. Lorgan was expecting them, and soon made them feel very much at home. No hurry and bustle was displayed by this mature woman of the world, who sprang from Quaker ancestors. No extreme anxiety to entertain and amuse them, which invariably ends in making a guest feel uncomfortable.

Prudence was given a room to herself, and while she was looking about, admiring the costly furniture,

and slyly feeling the soft velvet carpet upon the floor, she was attracted by a very handsome piece of furniture, that was obviously intended for a writing desk. Attracted by anything odd, and yet elegant, the natural curiosity of her sex led her to examine its curious receptacles. Some pens, paper and ink, were to be found within, for the accommodation of the guests who might occupy the room, no doubt; and there were so many drawers that she was tempted to peer into one after another, observing that they were empty. Upon withdrawing one drawer, she was surprised to find that another one opened into this, though the second one could only be drawn out after the first Drawing this out cautiously—for had been removed. she was now thoroughly interested—she was surprised to see a large packet of papers sealed up with sealingwax, lying within. Its position was such that the superscription presented toward her, and it at once attracted her attention, even causing her to turn pale. It read thus: "Not to be opened until the year 1855," and Prudence knew that she could never be mistaken about the handwriting of her father. But after she had replaced the two drawers rather hastily, thinking she heard her sister-in-law about to enter her room, she recognized the absurdity of the idea which had like a flash taken possession of her, that it was her father's writing. She looked quite pale as she sat there, thinking it all over. Of course, it was not possible that it was her father's writing, she knew that, and vet it seemed impossible that she could be mistaken

about it. But how could these two men have been connected with each other? Mr. Lorgan never knew her father. Had never even seen him. Strange, indeed. Before she had altogether recovered her composure, her amiable sister did knock at the outer door to ask if she was ready to go below. "You are not well, Prudence," she said at once. "The ride has been too much for you, while it has done me much good."

"Oh, it is nothing, Mary, I assure you. I will come down at once."

She wished to tell Mary about her curious discovery, but how could she? Had she done right? Was it not a punishment for her foolish curiosity, that she was to be haunted in the future by the remembrance of that letter, half believing in her first impression, and yet not daring to mention it to any one? Well, she must carry this alone. It would be only one more added to the trials, of which her life had been so largely made up. Then she composed herself and descended to the parlor.

At the close of his rehearsal, late in the afternoon, Ned proceeded to the bank and accompanied Mr. Lorgan home. The host was unusually genial at the tea-table, surpassing his usual powers as an entertainer, so his wife said; while Miss Riverson, always ready to take people at their word, enjoyed herself serene'y, because it was all so home-like in Mr. Lorgan's mansion, in spite of the luxurious surroundings. Mr. Lorgan's inquiries after her health were so sin-

cere, seeming doubly so to her, she really felt as if they were very old friends, and she heartily assented to his gracefully expressed hope, that this would not be the last time they should have the pleasure of entertaining them. Questions were showered pretty fast upon Ned Riverson, who was full of anticipated pleasure, and very confident that his orchestra would satisfy the audience.

Prudence Riverson was so much inclined to reverie during the meal and the conversation following it, that she regarded with especial pleasure any opportunity to escape from the others for a few moments. She was apparently looking out the window, watching the hurrying crowds upon the street, but in reality her thoughts were otherwise engaged, upon something that was her exclusive mental property; that was the worst of it. With Mr. and Mrs. Lorgan to entertain them, time did not hang heavy on the hands of Marian or her mother, and soon after Ned left the house, Albert Howard called, to escort Marian to the hall. The rest of the party, thinking it would be a pleasure to see the people assemble, also left the house soon The hall where the best concerts and entertainments of that character were given in those days, was "The Musical Fund Hall," on Sansom street. near Eighth. It was here that Jenny Lind first permitted the Philadelphians to hear her glorious voice in song. Mr. and Mrs. Lorgan and their guests, were ushered to the seats reserved for them, and found Marian and Albert seated close by. The organization

of this orchestra had been watched with considerable pride by the citizens of Philadelphia, and many good words had been spoken for it by the press. For this reason the society of the city was qui vive, and the great hall was rapidly filling with the wealthy and cultured of the city.

Marian was really nervous, and exhibited it by her manner and conversation. Like an affectionate sister who had always sympathized with her brother's curious passion for music, she could have experienced no greater anxiety at this critical moment of his career, if the whole concert had depended upon her.

"Hus—h," ran through the packed house like a wave, as the curtain rose and revealed about twenty-five musicians seated upon the stage, their instruments in their hands; some young men and some with gray beards, and all awaiting the word of command from yonder smooth-faced stripling, who at that moment walked upon the stage among them, with the coolness of a veteran, and who, upon being greeted with a storm of applause, turned, and bowed politely to the audience.

Then, as the noise subsided, he saw that the score of "The Caliph of Bagdad" was before him, and amid the breathless expectations of his audience, with every eye upon him, musicians and all, he suddenly raised his baton.

Every instrument proclaimed its presence and the careful training of its performer at the same instant, and as the movement of this beautiful overture be-

came livelier, and its harmonious combinations of sound exerted their full powers upon the musical senses of the listeners, while at the same time the enthusiasm of the leader was fast carrying him beyond the seventh heaven of ecstatic joy, his movements constantly increasing in rapidity together with his pronounced abandon, communicated his own passionate emotion to his audience. Now he moved his baton with the rapidity of lightning it often seemed, while with a nod, or by his uplifted or depressed left arm, he commanded the various changes of crescendo or diminuendo, so necessary to give soul to the music, until many in the audience were seen to lean forward in their seats, as if they were fearful lest the next strains should escape them, or that the least gesture of command of the talented young leader, might be lost to them.

When at last the grand theme terminated, and in spite of the apparent reluctance of the leader to arrest the cause of his own delightful emotions, every instrument ceased as he gave the downward stroke with his baton, the audience broke forth in cheers; and the reputation of Ned Riverson was firmly established.

Marian cried for joy, while her patient mother found it necessary to wipe the tears from her eyes, which an overflowing heart sent forth too abundantly. But the leader seemed to have forgotten where he was. He appeared dazed by the sudden cessation of the music, and not until he had been recalled from that other blissful world by his first violin, did he remember the

place and the occasion, and turning round to the audience made his proper acknowledgments. The audience at last recognizing the true cause of his seeming impoliteness, only applauded the louder.

Well up in front among the centre seats a heavy set, chubby-faced man was seated, who was accompanied by a little black-and-tan dog, that in some mysterious manner had obtained entrance to the hall in spite of the attendants. They both attracted attention by the violence of their applause when the music They, is used purposely, for the dog knew his friend Ned Riverson, and barked his approval of the grand music. Professor Carl and Keno afforded Marian and her friends much amusement. Mr. Lorgan knew very well the large-hearted musician, through a common bond of sympathy between them. And in this way the concert proceeded, one number succeeding another, until the last upon the programme; all being worthy of the musicians and the audience. The overture to the opera of William Tell, by that wonderful master, Rossini, was not then so familiar as it is now, and it was to be expected that the rendition of this overture-perhaps the culmination of the genius of its author-for the closing number, together with the fine music that had preceded it, was gradually bringing the audience up to a sublime height of the musical emotions.

Each musician was excited by the spirit of his leader, and seemed bent upon proudly performing his part without a mistake. As the introductory portion of the overture gradually died away with its staccato notes, the musical representation of the storm, with its vivacious allegro movement burst upon the audience like the rush of a wind that carries all before it. Then, as the storm died away, they were treated to the beautiful interlude with its andante movement, that leads up so cautiously to the bugle call that constitutes the introduction to that grand march, never yet excelled for its martial inspirations, in the opinion of many.

But on these musicians swept, with the precision of veterans. From one surprise to another they led the captivated audience, not a man among them but appreciated in his soul the grandeur and power of the music he was bringing forth. And as the end drew near, and the final run of the various instruments from the lower to the higher notes, leading at last to the grand crash of the bass instruments, the magical baton descended toward the floor, and remained there. moment passed, before the audience could break the spell by beginning the applause. But then it came with a mighty voice! Thrice was Ned obliged to acknowledge the ovation; and when the delighted and cheery Professor Carl with his dog rushed upon the stage, and embraced his young protege, while Keno jumped about and barked his appreciation; the applause was greater than ever. Doctor Ransom now came forward, and congratulated his friend upon his triumph, with deep feeling.

Taken all in all, the Riverson family could not help

feeling proud of their careless but happy son and brother that night.

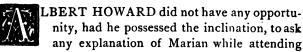
When they were seated in Mr. Lorgan's parlor after the concert, that gentleman turned to Aunt Prudence and said:

"You see now, Miss Riverson, that when a boy seems infatuated with music from his earliest childhood, it is not possible to direct him to any other vocation. And I think this will apply to some other pursuits and professions as well. The Maker of all sometimes puts the stamp of our designated sphere of usefulness upon us in such a manner, that we cannot help recognizing it, and when that is the case, how foolish it is for us to oppose. Rest assured that Ned did not choose for himself. He could no more help it than he could arrest the earth in its course."

"I have lost the disposition I had to dispute that point with you since this evening's demonstration, Mr. Lorgan. I shall not contest the matter with Ned any longer. I may have been wrong after all, Mr. Lorgan," answered Prudence Riverson, which statement was quite a condescension for her.

## CHAPTER XXX.

TOM RANSOM'S REPORT.—MARIAN DISMISSES ALBERT
HOWARD.



her at the concert. It was only afterward that she recalled his lack of enthusiasm and appreciation of the fine music, so correctly rendered under her brother's guidance. She was so wrought upon at the time, it seemed as if every one of that great audience must have been similarly moved. Then as she thought of Albert's coolness and his scarcely concealed dislike of her noble brother, while that of Ned for him never had been concealed, the recollection did not increase her love, or her respect for the man to whom she was still engaged.

Albert was waiting impatiently for a report from Tom Ransom; and from his delay he had often been ready to question Tom's loyalty to his interests. But at last that gentleman came to see him, and when they had been seated where no one could overhear or interrupt them, the disclosure began.

"Well, Tom, I hope you have something to tell.

You have certainly taken time enough," said Albert, with a perceptible sneer, which was not lost upon Tom; who at once determined that it should cost Albert about ten dollars. Men of Tom's calibre, accept such things very humbly, if there is money enough behind the insult.

"I want to tell you, Albert, that I have been working hard all the time. If you think I've had a soft job your badly fooled," said Tom, with an injured tone of voice.

"Don't stop now, Tom, for I suppose you can tell me something at last? If so, I don't know that I shall have any cause to complain," said Albert.

"Why yes, I reckon I have got something to tell you, but the fact is when it comes to the pinch, I really hate to do it, for you see I can't understand it myself," said Tom, apologetically.

"Well, who said you were to understand it," said Albert, savagely. "I will aftend to that. All I want to know from you is what you saw or learned about it."

Mentally marking down another ten figure in his bill, which was now assuming large proportions, Tom resumed. "I intended to say, if you hadn't interrupted me, that I have been keeping the old mill and the house in sight every day for the last month, and I have also seen Miss Marian several times."

"Where did she go? What did you see?" interrupted Albert.

"See here, Albert, who's a telling this any way?

If you'll jest keep a little quiet you'll hear something pretty soon.

"Now, I've followed her several times through the woods back of this place, and twice she saw me, and I had to speak to her, but I don't think she thought that at all strange. And she always went to Jackson's house, where she seemed to disappear. I waited about there, where no one could see me, of course, and in the two hours I never seed any more of Marian Riverson."

"Did any one ever go into the house during this time?" asked Albert, eagerly.

"Let me see," said Tom, reflectively. "Once, no twice; that's so, by Jingo; the man did go in there, but he only staid about three quarters of an hour, I think."

"Who was it?" asked Albert.

"There you've got me, Albert. I'm blessed if I could make him out."

"Was it the same man on both occasions?" was asked of Tom.

"I really believe it was, but you see I could hardly make afferdavid to it, Albert. Indeed, I couldn't."

"Who the devil do you suppose wants you to, you looney? This won't go into court. Go on!"

"Then I would go back again toward Riverson's to watch, and I always saw her at last coming home; but I never could catch her coming out of Reub Jackson's house. And once, after waiting several hours to catch her, I struck up alongside your south fence and

got on the turnpike, and then walked down the path until I came to the toll-house, and asked Reub if Marian was there, saying I wanted to speak to her, that I thought I had seen her go in. And would you believe it? the old fellow just lied me square out of it! Said he had been right there ever since dinner, and he knowed mighty well she wasn't in the house and hadn't been there. He even insinuated that I couldn't see well! A fellow that can take the head off'en a squirrel one hundred yards, too!"

"Go on," said Albert, impatiently, as Tom paused to refresh his memory, but in reality to recount his grievances and cast up the bill once more, which must soon be mentioned now.

"And then that very same evening I met her again, just as she was going down the hill to the bridge, and she looked at me kind o' queer, but she didn't ask me what I wanted of her. No, sir; she was too cute for that, and I didn't mention it either. And once, I remember, after watching Jackson's house a couple of hours, I thought I'd go down on the lower pike and walk a bit of the way towards Manayunk, At last I saw a woman coming towards me, that I took for her, by her walk, and I just turned up a lane to be out of her way. But when she passed I saw I was mistaken. You see, I've knowed her from a little tot."

"Well?" inquired Albert.

"Why, when I looked around after a few minutes, I saw this woman going up the hill and into Jackson's

house, although that wasn't much, or anything very curious. But I just cut up another way, thinking it was high time to be in the woods back of your house again; and sure enough, in due time I saw Miss Marian going home just as I usually did."

"What days did she usually go on these expeditions?" asked Albert.

"Oh, I came near forgetting that," said Tom.
"The fact is, it was always either Friday or Saturday,
never on no other day."

"Do you know anything more?"

"Why man, ain't that enough?" said Tom.

"Yes, I think it will do," returned Albert, in a tone and with a gesture, that Tom thought meant trouble between the young people.

"About how much do I owe you, Tom?" Albert now asked his companion.

"Let me see," said that worthy, "there's five weeks and that's about thirty-five days. Had to watch Sundays well's any other day. And when I work I get two-and-a-half a day, and can easy make half a dollar more after supper in the shop, which would be three dollars a day."

"The devil," interrupted Albert. "You don't work half the time in daytime, let alone after supper."

"You see, you've got to have a basis of calculation, and that's just the way it stands. That would make, three times five is fifteen and one to carry, and three times three is nine, and one makes ten. Just one hundred and five dollars, Albert; but look here now,

danged if I could ever understand the meanness of some people, so I'll just throw off the ten you gave me, and call it an even ninety-five."

"Well, here's your money, damn it," said Albert, handing Tom some gold pieces with considerable anger, but knowing very well that he could do nothing more, because he was in Tom's power, owing to the business they had just finished.

Tom then departed, jingling the money in his pocket, very busy thinking it all over, but he did not forget to bid Albert a very cordial good-bye, which that young man did not return in the same affable manner. As Tom walked slowly homeward, his thoughts ran as follows:

"Bless me, but that was slick, and here's for the West, but I'll have to hide this well. And I reckon it won't be long before a certain wedding will be declared off. Ha! ha! What if it should come about so that smart youngster of mine, should get her? Well, he hasn't always treated his hard-working father with the respect that was his due; but after all, I don't know but I'd as soon see him get her, as Albert Howard. And it would make old Prudence so mad, that I'd enjoy that part of it sure enough. If it should turn out that way, blamed if I don't let on I done it a purpose," and here Mr. Ransom broke into a hearty laugh at the idea, in which jovial frame of mind he reached his home.

It was only the following evening, after his interview with Tom Ransom, that Albert Howard

visited Marian Riverson again-who still remained his betrothed—his heart filled with the most ignoble suspicions of the girl, of whose hand he had always been unworthy. Marian received him in the parlor, where a cheerful fire was burning in the old-fashioned fire-place, the well polished andirons holding up securely the blazing logs. noticed his manner at once, and suspected that the crisis was at hand. Nor did this insight into his purpose make her more yielding. On the contrary, it steeled her heart against any reconciliation, once the fatal words of separation should be spoken. While Albert was in her presence, and under the charm of her great beauty and gentle manner, he did lose some of the angry and suspicious feelings he had entertained, when he entered the house. Such was the state of mind of each, a few moments after Albert's arrival. To begin a conversation was quite difficult this evening, for the desire to discuss the questions at issue between them, and which had been drifting them farther apart, ever since Marian had overheard Albert's conversation with Mr. Norcross, was quite strong in both, and interfered with the easy flow of talk upon indifferent topics. Albert thought he would have no difficulty in introducing the burning question soon after his arrival; but at least an hour of very commonplace talk intervened, before he could First it was the concert, for which Marian had nothing but praise, but Albert had to confess that he was no lover of music, and was probably not able to

appreciate music of that character. This admission of his, whether made in a repentant spirit toward her for the injustice of his suspicions or not, had no such effect, for she was by this time biting her lips in an effort to preserve her composure. For the sake of her Aunt Prudence, and her knowledge of the mortgage due in the spring, she feared to take the step that would separate them, and yet she wished to do it. At last Albert said: "Marian, I would like to know whether you have lately found any more gold or not?"

Marian's face flushed quickly, but she turned toward him with a defiant air, believing that her final explanation with Albert was at hand.

"I believe the last was a month ago," she said, with considerable calmness, under the circumstances. "But why do you ask, Albert? You know that I have reason to feel somewhat sensitive upon the subject."

"Yes, I ought to know that," he replied. "And I have been trying my sest to find whether there really was any reasonable explanation of this business, Marian. But I can't find any. I wish to the Lord I could, for it worries me."

"If you could inform me how, and why, it occurs, you would afford me quite as much satisfaction," Marian replied.

Apparently paying no heed to this, Albert continued:

"Do you visit old Mrs. Jackson very often, Marian?"

She started, in spite of her watchfulness, and Albert noticed it. A very good illustration of the confusion of guilt, he thought.

"I really do not take the same interest in these queries that you appear to, Albert," said Marian, somewhat haughtily. "I thought you knew very well that she nursed Ned and me when we were babies, and that we all think a great deal of her. I expect to visit her often, so long as she lives. Pray, have you any serious objections to that, sir?"

"No very special objection, Marian. But why do you always go on Friday or Saturday?" he asked.

Marian's eyes now flashed the fire she had for some minutes felt raging within her, and she arose in her excitement, while she gave Albert Howard his dismissal.

"I am glad to know you at last, Albert Howard, and I think have reason to congratulate myself, that the discovery was not delayed until it was too late. Now, thank heaven, there is ample time. You have lately been worrying me about this unfortunate affair of mine, refusing to believe that I had told you all I knew about it, or as much as any of us could find out, do the best we could. Not content with this, you have even permitted insinuations to be repeated, without giving them, a vigorous and manly denial; such as a young lady has a right to expect from the man she has promised to marry, and who has been professing to love her. Not stopping there, you have gone from one brutal act to another, until you have set some creature to spy upon my actions; and then,

unlike the gentleman I supposed you to be, you come here to taunt me with it, hoping, perhaps, to elicit a confession from the girl who has so basely deceived you, the innocent and spotless son of his father!"

Here Marian paused for breath, while Albert, who was now also upon his feet, stood spell-bound by her beauty, which her anger only heightened.

He was beginning to relent, but when he attempted to stop her, she only waved him aside imperiously, and resumed:

"I wish to say that I know this is true, sir. How I know, it matters not; but I do know that you can never be anything more to me, Albert Howard; and I hope you will take this ring and give it to some other girl, who may not happen to be afflicted with the disgraceful infirmity of occasionally finding a few gold pieces, that she is unable to account for. And I wish to add, that when I was a younger and more unsophisticated girl, I promised to become your wife; but I have gradually learned that I never could respect you, and without that, love would be impossible with me. You live in a world that I only obtain a glimpse of, when I come in contact with such sordid and suspicious natures as your own."

"Oh yes," said Albert, now ready to throw off all disguise, since he saw the case was hopeless: "Perhaps you could tell me who you met so regularly at Jackson's every week?" and noticing her surprise and disgust, which he took for a sign of guilt, he hastened to add:

"Aha! I see that I struck home that time. And if it was in order for me to guess, I should say it was that conceited young pill-peddler, named Ransom. A precious nice family that of his, as I happen to know," said he, with as much contempt as he could indicate, by his tone and gestures.

Marian was fully aroused now, if she had not been before.

"I see you are capable of any base thought or insinuation, sir, and I hope you will not prolong this useless and painful interview. I am glad my brother is not at home, for I fear I should not be able to prevent him from chastising you, as you deserve," she said, with flashing eyes.

"Well, I wouldn't mind settling some old scores in that way, with such a baby as Ned Riverson. But I think it will be my turn to laugh next spring, when the mortgage the governor holds on your old mill, comes due. I guess I shall be revenged on you then, my lady."

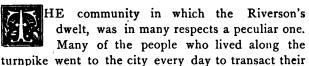
"Do you mean to say that your father holds the mortgage on our mill?" asked the affrighted girl.

"I think he does, but if you don't believe it, just ask Saving Grace, Esq., he will tell you, that is, if he doesn't choose to lie about it, and in that case you'll have to wait till it comes due to see who will take it from you. Good-bye, Miss Marian. Your fine feathers will not need plucking after that," and with these words he departed, Marian refusing to hold any further conversation with him, and merely pointing to

the door in her anger, fearing that any further conversation with him might lead her to acts scarcely proper for a young lady. When he was gone, she dropped into a seat and began to weep, but not for the lover she had lost. Her only thought was for the vengeance which she knew Judge Howard would seek to wreak upon her family, for her sake. And there was her sick mother and her Aunt Prudence, with the accumulation of sorrows that had already embittered her life. All this, or in great part, was to come upon those she loved, through her. Mrs. Riverson, fortunately, was already in bed, but Aunt Prudence had heard the latter part of the quarrel, and now came into the room. Her disappointment was great, but she did not upbraid her niece for sending away the lover who might have been so powerful to help them, and she was much disturbed and very indignant, when she learned that Judge Howard was their creditor.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

DOCTOR KENNEDY'S DEATH AND DEACON MCCAL-LUM'S STORY.



turnpike went to the city every day to transact their business, and for that reason thought they belonged in the city; but the greater number were farmers and operatives in the numerous mills, who in a social way could only be classed with a rural population.

A matter of news, such as the rupture of the engagement between Albert Howard and Marian Riverson, was too choice a bit of gossip to occupy much time in making its way through and beyond the social circle to which both families belonged. Full particulars were given, and various were the opinions expressed in different quarters. It was not long before they began to hear of statements made by Albert Howard that hardly fell short of slanderous, and Marian and her mother sought in every way to keep this knowledge from Ned. Interested as he now was in the city with his music, and often coming home but twice a week, this was not difficult to accomplish. Marian consulted long with her mother, before she could

make up her mind to continue her work for the mill, and yet she did not see what excuse she could make, nor how, having once tasted the freedom involved in making her own living, she could ever give it up; especially when financial clouds were hovering threateningly above them.

Nor could she escape going once more in any event, so she concluded to continue her work, if she saw no indication that her disguise had been penetrated. But she could not think of taking the old path through the woods any longer! She might be subjected to the insults of Albert Howard, who was now aware of her custom, though not of its meaning. Now the turnpike would answer her purpose, though she often selected the road down the creek to the pike, in order to avoid passing Judge Howard's house. Once at Mrs. Jackson's and her disguise assumed, she felt more at her ease, and upon her next visit to the mill, when she stopped and gave Doctor Kennedy a full account of her troubles, Marian remarked to him, "that it often seemed to her as if she really was another girl, so long as she was dressed in the clothes, and was transacting the business of Miss Alice Whitby."

The doctor laughed heartily, and then told her that there was more in her statement than she had any idea of, for late investigations into the mesmeric condition, seemed to show a very intimate connection between the mental state and the part one might be playing or acting.

The doctor cheered her troubled spirits exceed-

ingly in this interview, and counseled her to continue her work, expressing his ability to take care of the mortgage next spring, should it be necessary. Then Marian passed out of his store with a lighter heart, not for a moment thinking that this was her last interview with their good old friend and physician; nor did she think much that day of the decided disinclination Doctor Ransom exhibited to converse with her, though there may have been something in the fact that she could not well endure it herself, when she remembered the manner in which her name had been coupled with his, by her late lover. She had yet another trial to encounter after she reached the mill, that made her cheeks tingle with mingled shame and indignation, when she remembered how long she had looked upon such a man as Albert Howard, as her future husband.

While she was engaged in looking over her rolls, and compairing them with the accounts in the books, Albert came in and began talking with Mr. Norcross, about the interview, in which she had taken such a prominent part. Their conversation was low, and she could not hear all they said, but she did hear Mr. Norcross rebuke Albert for his suspicions of Marian Riverson, and felt her heart warming more than ever toward that gentleman, after she heard him say; "I am certain, Albert, that Marian Riverson is all that a noble, pure-minded lady could be."

A few weeks later, Deacon McCallum called one evening to inform them of the precarious condition of their good friend and physician, Doctor Kennedy.

His story was, that the Doctor had been taken so violently ill while passing Mr. Butler's house, that he was compelled to seek the hospitality of the clergyman and his wife. He had now been ill several days, and although Doctor Ransom was almost constantly by his side, and his sister, Mrs. Shrock, from Montgomery County, had also arrived, nothing that had been done for him, had made any impression upon his disease, when the deacon left Mr. Butler's that evening.

Doctor Ransom gave it as his opinion, that he was suffering with an obstruction of one of the intestines, and would not be likely to recover. A couple of professors from the city would visit him the next morning, to see what they could do for him.

Mrs. Riverson declared that she must go and see the doctor in such an extremity, and accordingly the next day, she was driven to Mr. Butler's house, accompanied by her sister Prudence.

The good old man's pinched face brightened up for a moment, as they entered the room, and with a calm voice he told them his time had come, and bid them good-bye. Nor did he forget in his death agony his young friend, Marian, sending her a loving message, and giving Mrs. Riverson good advice concerning her. If a near relative had died the members of Colonel Riverson's family could not have mourned more seriously than they did for Doctor Kennedy. He had always seemed more like an uncle to Marian and Ned than their family physician. He was always so hearty and sincere with them. Always increested in every-

thing that concerned them, and his presence at their bedside when ill, caused a thrill of pleasure to pass over the enfeebled frame, that was of itself largely instrumental in the recovery that followed.

Even Doctor Monroe, with his large heart, which essayed to embrace all mankind, not excepting those misguided members of his profession denominated "regulars," called several times a day during the doctor's illness, hoping each time there might be something he could do.

As he approached the bedside of his professional rival for the last time, and stood there with tears in his eyes, Doctor Kennedy looked up, and being touched by this silent grief of one who in the bitter rivalries of professional life, might have been expected to look upon his providential removal with considerable complacency, reached out his hand to Doctor Monroe and said:

"Good-bye, Monroe. The pill or potion has never been made that can get me out of this. Perhaps we'll meet over there, but not as rivals. There are no schools there, Monroe; if you have ever been dishonest in your profession, I don't believe you were aware of it. God bless you."

With such expressions of good-will for all about him, this honest man, kind friend and honorable physician, bravely closed his eyes upon the scenes of this life.

After Marian's first grief for her old friend had subsided, she thought of his promise to her about the

mortgage, and which, knowing so well his ability and readiness to do them a favor of that kind, had comforted the family very much, whenever they contemplated their financial troubles. Now, his death had changed their confidence back to the old fear.

A week after Doctor Kennedy's death and burial, Deacon McCallum called again upon his neighbors for a friendly chat, and to console them as well as he could about the doctor's death. He had at length resumed his neighborly attentions, which had been for a time suspended, subsequent to his rejection by Prudence Riverson. After conversing some time about the loss they had all suffered in Doctor Kennedy's death, he proceeded to give them a little gossip connected with the sad event:

"Mrs. Butler," said he, "has been telling me a rather curious circumstance connected with Doctor Kennedy's illness, Mrs. Riverson, that I thought you would be interested in hearing."

"Anything connected with his last illness cannot fail to interest us, Deacon," Mrs. Riverson answered.

"I thought so, and therefore determined to let you know it. Strange things are happening every day, that lead us to believe we are indeed living in the latter days. But I can't see the philosophy of this proceeding, though there may be some good reason for it, unknown to me," observed the deacon, innocently.

"Well, you know the doctor's sister came down from Montgomery County to assist Mrs. Kennedy in taking care of him, and she is full of the old-fashioned

notions for which the Pennsylvania Dutch are so noted. Mrs. Butler went on to say, how she began to worry about her brother as soon as she arrived, though that was no great wonder, considering the serious nature of his illness. She would say, for instance, that there were many things of greater importance in a case of illness than doctors' prescriptions; and she was so afraid her brother would die, and yet would not listen to her about the remedy she wished to try in his case; for he always made fun of these ideas of hers. But she insisted that she had helped many a person from a sick-bed after the doctors could do nothing for them, and she continued to hint at something she did not feel quite free to mention, until Mrs. Butler asked her what it was she wished to do for him? Then she took Mrs. Butler into a room where they could be alone, and there told her, partly in a whisper, that if she could only find a black hen without a white feather upon it, she would cut off its head and immediately place its quivering and bleeding body into a large kettle of boiling water, and then close the lid t ghtly. Then it should be allowed to boil several hours when the soup would be ready to feed to the And Mrs. Butler confessed to me that it sick man. was all she could do to maintain a sober face: but when Mrs. Shrock looked up, and with tears in her eyes, begged her to help her carry this out, Mrs. Butler could not refuse, although she scarcely thought it would make an appetizing plate of soup. The result was." continued the deacon, "that the black hen

was found and sacrificed, just as Mrs. Shrock directed, and no one knew of it at the time but these two. Then the anxious sister fed some of it to her brother, merely telling him it was some chicken soup she had prepared for him herself. And the poor man really relished it, and seemed to feel better after taking it, so Mrs. Butler said. And she also said the soup did not look bad, although she was not equal to the task of tasting it."

"What a heathenish idea," said Prudence, as the deacon concluded his story. "I declare, I never would have encouraged such a ridiculous notion as that, and I wonder that Mrs. Butler could do so."

"I dont think she ever would have consented, if it had been anything that could have injured him in any way, or was likely to interfere with his treatment," replied the deacon.

"What did the poor woman say about it, after her brother's death?" asked Mrs. Riverson.

"Oh, she said, she never should regret the longest day she lived, that her brother did not get that soup two days before he did; for she believed it would have cured him. According to Mrs. Butler, the result did not seem to shake her faith in the virtues of blackhen soup in the least degree," the deacon concluded.

"Poor man," said Mrs. Riverson. "I am glad he knew nothing of this, for it would have made him angry even upon his dying bed. He had so little patience with such superstition, perhaps because he had seen so much of it in his boy-hood days. We have

lost a dear friend, as well as a scientific physician. I don't like to think of it, and yet there is always something left to be thankful for. I have known Sydney Ransom for many years, and I shall now place the confidence in him, that I formerly reposed in Doctor Kennedy."

"But you will find Sydney Ransom is not Doctor Kennedy, Mary Riverson! And you ought to know it in advance," said Prudence.

"There you show your prejudice, sister," returned Mrs. Riverson, sweetly. "I am sure Sydney is not at all like his father, and has better qualities even than his mother. Doctor Kennedy always told me that Sydney was fully up with the times in his profession. You are a little unreasonable about Doctor Ransom, Prudence, and I hope you will overcome it."

Marian looked very much interested in the conversation, but she feared to further provoke the bitter sarcasm of her aunt, and so she wisely held her peace.

"I think I must be going now," said the Deacon.
"I did not suppose it was so late. It is very cheerful here," then taking his hat and carefully placing the red bandanna inside, he bid the family good night. Just at that moment the tall, old fashioned clock that stood in the corner of the sitting-room, slowly struck the hour of eleven. The Deacon was not restless and flighty, like so many young persons of the present day. He was more mature and reliable. He could always be depended upon to remain as long as any one cared to have him.

# CHAPTER XXXII.

#### THE FRESHET.

HE winter had been long and dreary to Mar-

ian Riverson. Her brother was in the city the greater part of his time, and her work for the mill had to be ready in time, not to mention her share of that which is always necessary in every household. As for Prudence, she was fast losing that spirit of repining that idleness, combined with a cultivated selfishness, so easily produces. The consciousness that the work now depended upon her, together with her awakened conscience about her patient and overworked sister-in-law, seemed to have inspired her with courage and hope, notwithstanding there had been no change in their condition, no rain-

Marian felt keenly the unkind remarks and the slurs upon her, by those of her sex who were envious of her beauty, as well as the affection, all who really knew her, felt for her.

bow of promise to be seen through the clouds of finan-

· cial gloom, fast gathering above their heads.

As for young Doctor Ransom—did he act as if he really thought of this young girl he had known so long? At least, in the way that Julia Riverson, in her

spite, had proclaimed. Marian could not believe it, as she met him and received his instructions as to the care her mother required, when he made his occasional professional visits during this winter.

After it had happened so often, that his studied manner toward her was fully recognized, it began to create a feeling of disappointment within her, which she scarcely knew how to define. He was certainly very kind to her. And he was always ready to save her trouble and anxiety; that she had noticed. But no matter how much she was disposed to resume the old friendship, which had been interrupted by her engagement with Albert Howard, he only continued to preserve his grave and dignified demeanor toward her.

Doctor Monroe would occasionally call upon Prudence Riverson and Deacon McCallum for assistance, when he was about to receive some runaway from the South; and he never called for that cause in vain. During this winter, he informed Prudence upon one occasion that he had made the acquaintance of a gentleman, who was the head of the movement in his vicinity, some twenty miles south of them, and who appeared to know the Riverson family very well, asking especially after each member, but beyond this he would say but little.

"Did you learn his name, Doctor?" Prudence asked.

"Oh! I forgot about that, hardly thinking it would interest you. Yes, he said his name was Richard Lester. . . . But you are not ill, Miss Riverson?" noticing that Prudence seemed suddenly overcome by something.

"No, that is nothing, Doctor, only a slight faintness. Yes, we did know a gentleman by that name many years ago. My father was well known throughout this section," she concluded, with something of her old pride.

When the spring rains come in April, or the latter part of March, the valley of the Schuylkill is often subjected to freshets of the most sudden and violent character. At such times, everything on the banks of the canal or river, within and above the village of Manayunk, is more or less endangered. The numerous mills situated between the two streams are built of heavy masonry, and are supposed to be able to withstand these freshets. But for all this care, it has often happened in the past that the mad rush of the waters would gradually undermine a foundation, and so let down a part of the wall, and in this way, partially wreck the building. The mills situated above the town, between the canal and river, were usually in great danger, because they received the first shock of the waters, and the objects that might be drifting along on its bosom. Striking here first, they were apt to veer toward the southern bank of the river passing the more densely built part of the town and its mills.

In the early part of April, this spring, it had been

raining a couple of days, not very hard, however, but the ground had not been thoroughly thawed out, on account of a longer delayed winter than usual; and which fact caused the greater part of the water to follow the natural channels of the surface. There had been a shower this Friday morning, but towards noon it cleared up brightly, and as Marian had her week's task completed, and felt a little blue, she decided to go to the mill that afternoon. Recollecting that Mr. Norcross had asked her the week before, to remain the whole afternoon and assist him upon her next visit, she left home immediately after dinner. walk revived her spirits, and as she crossed the canal at the upper part of Main street, and took the path leading up to the large paper mill, she felt at peace with the world; happy in the love and sympathy of her dear mother, and some of the devotion of her Lappy brother. She only noticed that the water of the river was running swiftly, and was very turbid from the clay it always held in suspension after a heavy rain. After reaching the mill she was soon busily engaged with Mr. Norcross, and for some hours they were not interrupted by aught but the usual order of business about the mill, neither the Judge nor his son being present that afternoon.

Not far from half-past three o'clock upon that afternoon, Doctor Ransom came driving across the long covered bridge that spanned the river at the foot of Green Lane. As he drove slowly across, he thought there was an unusual velocity to the water, and he suspected that it was rising. As he handed the toll to the bridge-keeper, he remarked upon the signs of a freshet, and found that the old guardian of the bridge coincided with his view.

But accustomed as he and all who lived in Manayunk were to these matters, the river soon passed out of his mind, and after driving his horse to the stable, he was soon seated in his office. Finding some patients waiting for him, he was kept busy until halfpast four, and then the inclination to take a walk seized him.

As he came upon the street he noticed that people were flocking about the entrance to the long bridge, and to the numerous shorter bridges across the canal. Then he remembered his suspicions about a freshet, and hastened with many others to the bridge. Already the sight was appalling, for the flood was within a few feet of the long bridge, and travel had just been interdicted on account of the danger. No bank between river and canal could be seen. Nothing but a wide waste of rushing, seething waters, from the north bank of the canal to the south bank of the river, and the water still rising!

While he stood there with the crowd looking at the rising river, a frame house, washed from its foundations higher up the river, came floating down the middle of the stream, partly submerged, now careening this way and then in another direction, as it bore swiftly down upon the doomed bridge. The people held their breath as the house approached nearer and

nearer, until at length it struck a span of the wooden highway with a grinding crash, and as it moved on down the river only a huge gap in the structure was left behind to mark its passage. Looking below this bridge, Doctor Ransom observed that the operatives were being removed from these mills. The citizens were effecting this with the aid of skiffs and canal boats, that happened to be in the canal, and the work was going forward rapidly owing to the absence at this point of any great swell of the water. A few of the mills had their own bridges leading directly to the north bank of the canal from their doors, which facilitated the escape of the inmates.

The crowd of workers and spectators was now fast increasing, and the excitement ran high. All kinds of wooden houses and barns were sweeping by the town, and more than once some animal was to be seen clinging to the frail support it furnished, while its howls and piteous appeals, as it turned its eyes to the people crowding the river bank, made an affecting scene.

Just as the word came down the main street from the upper end of the village, that the Howard paper mill was in especial danger of destruction, while all the employees were yet inside the mill, Doctor Ransom encountered Doctor Monroe, who, with compressed lips, was hastening in that direction to see what he could do for the distressed.

As they came in sight of the mill and saw the operatives crowded in the windows of the second and third stories, while the raging water now covering the

lower windows, was rapidly approaching the next story, they recognized the peculiar danger that threatened the building. From the configuration of the river just above, the current swept from the north bank of the canal across to the river with great violence. Slightly west of the mill, within this area, on the north bank of the canal, and already surrounded by water, stood a large, heavily-framed barn. Even now when an unusually violent rush of the current set towards it, the barn was seen to topple over at one corner and then at another. Men were at work with ropes and had already made several fast to the timbers, and were then fastening the other ends to trees in the vicinity, though the ropes did not seem to have the necessary strength to hold it very long. Now the mill operatives could be seen begging the crowd to rescue them, for the noise was too great for their voices to reach the ears of the anxious spectators. Even now, those who looked on did not fully realize the danger the people were in, for the water often rises to a great height in a few hours, and as rapidly subsides, when the people can come out of their temporary prison.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Doctor Monroe, excitedly, to a group about him, "something must be done to rescue these people, and that pretty quick. When that barn goes down, it will take the mill with it."

"Oh, they are all right, I guess," responded one.

"Just wait till the water runs down, and they can get out easily enough," said another.

"My, oh my!" exclaimed the doctor. "Will you men stand here like cowards until night comes, without making a move? Doctor Ransom let us take a couple of boats and rescue these people. If we start from this point and keep below the greatest rush, we will be carried over to the mill safely enough, and can land lower down on the return trip."

"I will be with you in that venture, Doctor Monroe," said Sydney Ransom, who now buttoned up his coat and tucked his pants into his boot legs.

Doctor Monroe's earnest words, backed by the attitude of Doctor Ransom, and the obvious fright of the operatives, who were watching the barn and its shaky condition, at last moved the crowd to do something for their relief. Several large boats were brought up, and by common consent, the two physicians each took command of one, with but one assistant, in order to bring away a larger number of people on each trip the boat made.

By the time they were off, others were making ready to follow them, observing, as Doctor Monroe had predicted, that by keeping below the torrent, there was just current enough to sweep them rapidly over to the building.

Doctor Ransom's boat reached the mill just over the office near the eastern corner, and as he approached a window, a lady, whom he did not recognize, was weeping, while Mr. Norcross and many others were endeavoring to restore her confidence. Before the brow of his boat had touched the mill, the lady looked up, and with the tenderness that love could alone cause a lady to reveal, mingled with the fear of death, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Sydney, take me away from this place? It would kill my poor mother, if I should never return," and accompanying her supplication with outstretched arms toward him.

"My God! what are you doing here, Marian Riverson?" exclaimed the astonished young man.

"Miss Whitby has been quite hysterical, Doctor Ransom," Mr. Norcross now said, while the doctor was lifting the lady with great tenderness into his boat.

"I don't know Miss Whitby, Norcross, but I do know Miss Marian Riverson, though I don't pretend to know what she is doing here, nor is it perhaps any of my business."

"You are mistaken, Doctor Ransom," said Mr. Norcross, with more astonishment in his face than any danger from the freshet had been able to produce.

"Well, there is no time for explanation now, so just hand these people out until we are loaded, and then we will come back as soon as possible. Steady there, sit right down ma'am," said the doctor, as cool as could be, but with a delightful sensation pervading him, that would have made him dare anything just then.

"I will tell you all, when I see you again, Mr. Norcross," Marian Riverson—for she it was—called out to him as the boat pushed off with its load, and began its struggle for the north bank. Mr. Norcross had too much on his hands just then to waste much time in exclamations of astonishment, but he did say: "Well! that certainly does knock me all to pieces," and then he went to examine once more the appearance of the south-western corner of the building.

When Doctor Ransom reached the shore, he hastily placed Marian in charge of a kind lady he knew, who was waiting there with the crowd, and who lived close by, promising to return and drive her home, as soon as he had finished his work. Then he returned to his boat and worked with renewed energy; and as other boats were now engaged in the good work, they soon had the mill emptied of its inmates.

Doctor Monroe had not been idle, and presented a very sorry appearance to his patient wife, when he reached home. A couple of the girls who worked in the mill and who came out in the same boat with Marian, having heard the conversation between the lady they had known as Miss Whitby, and Doctor Ransom, were heard to say, as they started for their homes:

"Bless me, Lize, don't it beat you that Miss Whitby is really Marian Riverson, that was engaged to Albert Howard so long?"

"My eyes, won't that give us something to talk about after this flood is over?" her companion replied.

Doctor Ransom now repaired to the house where Marian was, and asking her to wait until he could get his horse and buggy, hastened rapidly down Main street. In a very short time he returned, and with an extra robe he wrapped Marian up very carefully as he placed her in his buggy, and then drove rapidly toward the Wissahickon.

Marian was very nervous and a little hysterical withal; and yet she was very grateful to find that she had escaped without harm. But the talk that this accidental exposure of her disguise and previous double life would occasion, did not tend to allay her agitation.

But at last she was sufficiently composed to give her rescuer an explanation. "No doubt you are anxious to know what my presence at the mill means, Doctor Ransom, for I owe *you* an explanation, if I do any one," said Marian.

"Do not do so, if it will distress you, Miss Riverson, if you will persist in addressing me as Doctor Ransom," said Sydney, looking rather tenderly upon his fair companion.

"I have been working in the office, or rather for the office—for my work was almost all done at home—for the last three years," Marian resumed, "and this was all done under the name of Miss Alice Whitby. I was introduced to Mr. Norcross by Dr. Kennedy, and I always stopped at Mrs. Jackson's house to assume the disguise in which you discovered me to-day, and part of which I have already removed. It was a concession to the pride of Aunt Prudence," Marian added, "but it is all ended now, and I would be glad of it but for one thing," and as to that, Doctor Ransom

forbore to question her, for he was happy enough just then.

Had she not made plain to him that she cared for him when she besought him to save her? Now he handed her out of his buggy to the care of her Aunt Prudence, and with a few hurried words of explanation he bid them good-bye, first preparing a composing draught for Marian to take, with the hope of averting a serious illness.

# CHAPTER XXXIII.

MARIAN'S ILLNESS, AND DOCTOR RANSOM'S ANXIETY.

OCTOR RANSOM made his professional

rounds the next morning with a warmer feeling for his patients. The dearest wish of his heart, one he had for years cherished stealthly, as if he had no right to entertain such feelings for one so far removed from him, since the events of the day before, seemed now within his reach. No, he could not be mistaken! The look, the tone, and the accompanying gestures, certainly revealed to him as he stood in the boat while upon his errand of mercy, her inmost heart. Then she did not try to undo afterward what she had in her distress revealed to him. Perhaps he

should have spoken to her then, and have settled at

once the question at issue, thus making sure of his long and secretly cherished hopes. He had thought of it as they were riding home together, but when his cooler judgment came, he perceived that it was no time for such a declaration, and might be regarded as an unfair advantage for a strong man to take of a girl, just after rescuing her from impending death.

To think that she had often been in the store when Doctor Kennedy was alive, and he had never penetrated her disguise! It was all very strange to him, and he could not help thinking of it this morning, to the extent of appearing rather preoccupied at times, though it was all with a delicious sense of lightness about his heart. When he saw Ned Riverson come into his office with a troubled countenance, quite unusual to him, he thought at once of Marian.

"I hope there is nothing the matter, Ned?" asked Doctor Ransom, grasping his friend's hand, and not waiting for him to speak first.

"Why, yes, there is, Sidney, Sis is sick this morning; has a high fever, talking out of her head and all that sort of thing. That experience of her's yesterday was too much for her. But I want to thank you, old fellow, for the part you took in it, though I always hoped with Marian, that her employment by Mr. Norcross would never be discovered. You see, I came home late last evening," Ned continued, "and found the family all in excitement over this adventure, and I was afraid Marian would be sick in consequence of it. Mother insisted that Marian should sleep with her last

night. Well, toward morning she was awakened by hearing Marian trying to unfasten the door. You know we always try to look after the fastenings of her room, because she will walk in her sleep once in a while. It was difficult to get her back to bed, mother told us, but she succeeded at last, and this morning there is no question about her having fever."

"And so you hastened over to tell me to come and see what is the matter, eh?" asked Doctor Ransom, impatiently.

"Why, Sidney, the fact is," said Ned, considerable hesitation, "it isn't just that and so I came here to tell you all about it, and first; to thank you again and again for myself and our family and then for Marian alone; and secondly, to explain to you that while we regard you as our family physician, we thought, inasmuch as the patient is Marian herself, and considering yesterday's experience, mamma and Aunt Prude thought it would hardly look well to have you wait upon her professionally, you know! There you have it, old fellow, and I hope you will understand it just as we mean it, and will not look upon it as a slight, or any lack of confidence we feel in your professional skill, just after you have done so much for us," concluded Ned, looking earnestly at his friend, as if he would read his inmost thoughts, before the doctor could venture to express them.

Doctor Ransom looked a little stunned by this information. He was so accustomed to view everything of this kind from a professional standpoint, that he

could not at first separate the physician from the lover, so he said:

"Yet it does hurt just the same, Ned, and I didn't expect it from your family, nor from Marian, after yesterday," said Sydney, sadly.

"It strikes me that you set unusual store to-day, by what Marian has to do with it, Sydney. It was only a short time ago that she complained to me about your being so different, so cool and disinclined to talk to her, if you happened to be alone together for a few minutes. What has come over you so suddenly, Sydney?" Ned asked, in conclusion.

"Did Marian say that about me, Ned?" Doctor Ransom asked, eagerly."

"Yes, she did; and some months ago at that; I couldn't understand it, and told her you were certainly the same old hearty friend you had always been to me. What does it all mean anyhow, Sydney? I hope you think enough of your friend Ned Riverson to tell him all about it?" said Ned, inquiringly.

"I will tell you, Ned, that is, if you will promise to keep my secret," returned his friend, deliberately, and which Ned readily promised to do.

"The truth is, Ned, that from the day when I gathered up my things in the old mill, and, after bidding you all good-bye, started across the bridge and walked up the hill on the other side, feeling inexpressibly sad when I thought I might be leaving the old happy days behind me forever, I have loved your sister. Knowing this, you can possibly imagine my

feelings—no, I don't suppose you can, for you have never been in love, Ned—when I had to look on and give no sign of the passion that was raging within me; while the one I adored became the promised bride of another!"

"Oh, confound that polite blackguard!" said Ned, impetuously; "don't speak of him. Give me your hand, Sidney, for this is just as I have always wanted it to turn out. But, go on."

"Then, when I saw that she never once thought of me in that way, yet was always kind and friendly to me, I only buried the secret deeper in my breast, and devoted myself more closely to my studies; and when Julia Riverson, with her envious feminine spirit, penetrated my secret, or guessed it happily—though unhappily for me, perhaps-I could no longer meet Marian with the old-time ease and freedom. it was, Ned, that in my pride and grief I vowed that I would never tell a tale of love to any woman, until, by accident or otherwise, I had first learned that she cared for me. That vow I am too proud to break, Ned, or, it may be, too stubborn; and the occurrence of yesterday has been the first circumstance that led me to hope that I might speak to Marian, without breaking my vow. She treated me as if she cared for me in that way, Ned. But she must have professional attention at once. Who did you decide to summon?"

"That was a pretty hard question to settle, Sydney, especially as we disliked to pass you by; but Ma-

rian seemed to be bashful at the idea of having you for her physician, and called me to her bed once or twice before I left to tell me to be sure and explain it properly to you. At last we decided, mainly through Aunt Prudence, that we would call Doctor Monroe," said Ned, apologetically.

"While I must worry over the fact that she is being treated by moonshine," said Doctor Ransom, dejectedly. "Monroe is a clever man, with a warm heart—there is no mistake about that—but he is one-sided in this, and I haven't much patience with it. Well, I will try and be satisfied, Ned, for it makes me happy to hear what you have told me. But I wish there was something I could do for her myself! I hope it will prove to be nothing serious, for then our anxiety would, indeed, be great, with little opportunity for me to help her. I shall come and inquire after her every day, Ned, and as soon as she is well enough, I must be certain of my fate at her hands."

"Never fear about that, Sydney Ransom. I am almost sure you will be successful, especially since I have heard your story; and if her brother can give you any assistance, you know it will be given with a will," said Ned, as he hurried out of the office.

Doctor Monroe hastened to his patient, and found her with a high fever, and a disposition to talk, though only bordering upon delirium. She ran on in a way that would have mortified her very much, if she had heard it all after her recovery. For instance, she was much concerned for fear Doctor

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Ransom would feel hurt because he had not been called to her professionally; and in the next breath would tell Doctor Monroe, that, of course, under the circumstances, they could not, yet without giving him any additional reasons; but his experience as a married man enabled him to see that the occasion of the freshet, and Marian's rescue, had probably inaugurated, or had concluded a romance, that was likely to involve a member of his profession in that village. Marian was also frank enough to inform Doctor Monroe, that she did not have very much faith in his potions, and begged that he would give her some of his strongest medicines, for she could not be sick very long.

The kind-hearted doctor sympathized with the young girl, and soothed her as well as he could. He believed it a very good thing for her that circumstances had selected him for her medical attendant in this illness; for with her peculiar temperament, the heroic doses of the old school would have finished her in a very short time, in his estimation.

Doctor Ransom drove to the house every evening to inquire after Marian, and at such times Mrs. Riverson would see him, and detail to him all Marrian's symptoms, and would always conclude by begging the doctor not to be offended because Doctor Monroe had been called in. Finding, after a few days, that the fever was subsiding, and was not likely therefore to be a case of typhoid fever, as he had from the first feared, he became more reconciled to

the temporary separation from the lady he now believed he had a right to love, and whom he had loved in secret, with no recognized right to do so, for several years.

During the week that Marian was confined to her bed, Doctor Ransom was observed to be very restless. It was the more noticeable, because he was usually so cool and self-possessed. Then the story of his rescue of Marian, and the fact that she had been working for the Howard's mill for years, under an assumed name and disguise, while engaged to marry Judge Howard's son, furnished her friends, as well as those of Doctor Ransom, with a theme of sufficient interest to keep them talking for some time. The surprise had been so complete to all! and to none more than to Albert Howard, who for the first time learned how Marian came to know him so well.

While this discussion proceeded, was it not natural that the guardians of the public peace and morals, should at once read in the coffee grounds within their cups, the fate that would surely bring Marian Riverson and Doctor Ransom together?

# CHAPTER XXXIV.

DOCTOR RANSOM PRESSES HIS SUIT.



T must be recorded as a matter of fact, that at the end of a week Marian Riverson was declared convalescent. No one received this

information with greater thankfulness, notwithstanding his professional knowledge had enabled him to expect it several days previous to its announcement, than Doctor Ransom.

Those who were most intimate with the doctor thought they noticed a change in his conduct about this time. He was fast losing his grave and dignified manner, and grew more friendly with all who came in contact with him, seeming to take pains in the fullness of his own heart, to aid in infusing a little more sunshine into the lives of those who were obliged to live the greater part of the time, among the clouds of adversity.

Although this professional man was growing more rapidly than ever beyond the sphere of his home circle, where Tom Ransom, his father, presided as the ostensible chief, Doctor Ransom did not for a moment entertain the idea of refusing to confide to his loving and faithful mother, his latest discovery; by far the

most important of his life. Had she not kept the secret she had extorted from him several years before with the skill of a trained diplomat? What if he was fast leaving her behind in that school of life that she must always view from a distance? Was that any reason why he should not almost upon the instant, hasten to this proud mother and make her heart glad, and God knows that her dark and thorny pathway needed such rays of sunshine to illumine it, by telling her all his hopes in reference to Marian Riverson.

In return she looked proudly and fondly upon him, and carressed him in her awkward manner, while with her strong and positive language, she inspired him with greater hope and faith in himself. But the mother did not tell her son how his father, after having learned 'all about Sydney's rescue of Marian, had in one of his communicative moods, intimated that something of this kind was likely to grow out of that incident. Nor how the father had chuckled over it, and insinuated in his inimitable manner that when Tom Ransom looked into a thing deeply, something was apt to come of it.

Doctor Ransom was permitted to see Marian the very first day she was well enough to sit up, through the kind tact of Mrs. Riverson, who, though not so shrewd and quick to observe as some, was, by reason of her loving heart, able to discern that this grave young physician was anxiously awaiting a proper opportunity to pour out the treasures of his strong manly heart, at the feet of her daughter. This knowl-

edge brought to her generous heart no pang. It is true, she had known Sydney Ransom as a boy who had worked for her husband, and in their earlier days it had never occurred to her that his active and ardent nature, contained the germs of the future lover of her daughter.

Sydney only pressed Marian's hand while he gave her the flowers he had been in the habit of leaving for her each day, since her illness began. Then wishing her a speedy return to that ruddy health that had always been the pride and delight of her friends, he left her, promising to see her soon again.

But before he did so, he had time to observe the heightened color of her pale cheeks, as she gave him her hand and thanked him for the great service he had rendered her, and the sight, and the sweet cadence of her now weakened voice, filled him with such renewed hope, that he departed with such rare good feeling for all mankind, that he quite forgot himself in the exuberance of his great happiness.

Ah! the wonderful and mysterious power of human love upon even the baser instincts of our nature! Such is its regenerating power, that the mere mention of the name of a loved one, has been known to convert a furious human beast into an humble repentant man!

But the time came at last, for which Doctor Ransom's lately acquired impetuous disposition had been impatiently waiting. Marian was well again, and when, some time during the day, Doctor Ransom did not drive through the old covered bridge and stop at the Riverson house, ostensibly to inquire into the condition of Mrs. Riverson's failing heart, the daughter became conscious, of an aching void in her own.

Upon this particular evening he scarcely made a pretense of visiting her mother professionally, for the almost June like weather of the last week in April, induced him to drive over to the Wissahickon after he had finished his daily professional work. Marian received him in the parlor, with a face radiant with the hues of re-established health. She is surely herself again, thought Sidney, and has had ample time since that day to think it all over, and ascertain the true state of her heart. It would not be improper to speak now?

After a few moments of conversation, Marian arose, saying:

"I will call mamma, Doctor Ransom, you probably wish to see her?" the latter, inquiringly.

"I do not think your dear mother has any warmer admirer than I, Marian—you see you have forgotten to call me Sydney—but if she is as well as usual, I will ask you to omit that formality this time, that is, if you will grant me the pleasure of your society this evening," added Doctor Ransom.

Marian blushed rosily, though she seated herself again without calling her mother, then she said:

"You might easily recall the fact that I always did enjoy your society, even from the time that I used to give you the lessons I had gone through, lent you the books I loved to read, and talked with you about them. I guess you remember that, do you not?" evidently declining to call him by name.

"Those happy days, and the unhappy ones that followed so closely after them, I could never forget, Marian. If for no other reason, the knowledge that in this way I became dissatisfied with the honorable though lowly station to which I had been born, would altogether preclude the idea of its ever being effaced from my memory. Your father was unusually kind to me, Marian. I think he first made me feel that I might make my way in the world to a higher position than my ancestors had ever been able to reach," continued Sydney.

"I am sure that you have amply repaid any little obligation of that kind, when you so bravely rescued my father's daughter from her very mortifying and perilous position in the mill. It was no wonder that I was beside myself, and forgot all about my disguise. I feel under great obligations to you for it, Doctor Ransom," she said, earnestly.

"But I do not wish you to feel that way. Indeed, I do not. In the first place, I would have done the same for any one exposed to danger as you were, and I could not have suspected that the first person to be rescued would be my early friend, and shall I say teacher?" asked Doctor Ransom

"Why, you may use that term, if it amuses you," said Marian, smiling, "but I am sure it deserves no such designation."

"But I am thoroughly convinced that it is the

only proper term to express the relation existing at that time. You did teach me then; and I may have forgotten some of the things you were anxious I should remember; but one thing, that I am sure you never dreamed of teaching me, I never could forget from that day to this," said Sydney, with much earnestness. He was sitting in a chair drawn close to the old fashioned hair cloth sofa, upon which Marian sat, and from her manner, tender, though properly tempered with maidenly shyness, it was obvious that now at least, she began to suspect the secret of his heart.

"I am sure that no other pupil would praise me so highly as a teacher," answered Marian, softly. "But you deal in enigmas, Sydney. Did you learn their use in conversation from the teacher you have been lauding so highly?" looking at him archly, with her half averted eyes.

"I must answer both yes and no, to that question, Marian," he answered. "Yes, because you were not conscious of this teaching, and I was not then audacious enough to mention it, or even to thank you for it; inasmuch as it was more like a curse than a blessing to me then; and I answer no, because, being the semblance of truth and honor yourself, you were incapable of teaching any one to dissemble."

"Thank you," she replied, softly.

"When simply as Tom Ransom's son, I came to work for your father, Marian," Sydney resumed, "you took a friendly interest in me; when I left the old mill for the last time, I stood upon the brow of the hill and looked back upon the old bridge, the mill and this dear old house for several minutes, although it was so dark I could only dimly discern their outlines. As I stood there, my boyish ambition was kindled anew, and I resolved to profit by your teaching, and if it were ever possible, to acknowledge to you the great power and influence upon me for good, of this great language of the heart. Yes, it is a language, Marian, that Jew or Gentile, Greek or Roman, Assyrian or Egyptian, have all used with the same facility and success.

"It has been known from the earliest dawn of our race until now, and will, I trust, continue to be spoken and understood so long as time shall last. And the peculiarity of this strange tongue is, that all these different people understand it, no matter by whom spoken. In fact, it is the only universal language! And need I add, dearest, that I refer to the language of love? sometimes spoken, but often unspoken, as was the case with me all these years.

"You taught me to love you, Marian, though you knew it not. You seemed so far above me then, that the thought of avowing to myself the extent of the boyish worship of my idol, almost frightened me. When I looked on silently for years, compelled to look upon you as the promised bride of another, do you wonder that ambition was nearly stifled within me? Or that I wished you had never opened my eyes to that other world, of which I had never dreamed before meeting you?

"Then, in my secret grief, I made a vow, a foolish one, perhaps, but which I did not dare to violate; then all hope fled from me, until I met you in your disguise at the mill. There I thought I recognized something that released me from my foolish vow, and hence I speak to you of my love that has continuously grown stronger, while I have been reaching man's estate. Am I mistaken, Marian? Can you not learn to love me in return?"

Sydney Ransom had gradually approached Marian, and with slight resistance upon her part, he passed his right arm about her waist, while she averted her face and was leaning slightly from him, but exhibiting no anger at his unusual familiarity.

"I can hardly express my gratitude in words for your kindness and your bravery in rescuing me from that dreadful mill," said Marian, slowly, and yet with deep feeling, merely pausing at this point: But Doctor Ransom, at the mention of the word gratitude, withdrew his arm from her waist, and rising to his feet, did not give her an opportunity to continue, as he exclaimed, passionately:

"But don't you see that it is not gratitude I ask from you, Marian? Do you mean to say that you could learn to love me?"

"No, Sydney, it was not that," she answered.

In a moment his arms had fallen from her, and he heaved a deep sigh to his disappointed hopes, and was about to leave her with a dejected air, when she stopped him by a gentle touch upon his arm, as she said:

"Oh, you foolish fellow; I never would have believed you were so excitable. You are as bad as Ned. I meant to say," repeating it very softly, "that I did not need to learn to love you. . because I already —" Her further words were lost, but Doctor Ransom must have heard them, and believed that they were favorable to his suit. At any rate, he did clasp her again in his arms and kissed her, once? no, twice! before he released her, and then she looked happy, instead of angry.

Doctor Ransom was radiant with his newly found happiness, while Marian with rosy cheeks, but with becoming modesty, was regarding with pleasure his joyous actions.

"Do you think my strange failing will worry you, Sydney?" asked Marian.

"To what do you refer dear?" asked Sydney.

"Oh! to that unfortunate habit of finding gold, for which I could never account. Almost the plague of my life," she added, with a tinge of bitterness.

"Has it not given you to me, Marian?" he asked.

"Indeed, it has not, Sydney, I never could have gone on with that other. . ." hesitating to proceed, when Doctor Ransom interrupted her by another caress, telling her he knew what she meant. Then he asked to see her mother at once, and as she had not retired to her room, Marian brought her into the parlor and was about to leave, when her lover seized her by the hand and detained her.

"Mrs. Riverson," said he, "I have a confession to

make to you. If I have committed a crime in aspiring to the hand of this lovely daughter of yours, I pray your forgiveness. My sole excuse must be, I could not help it. I only need your sanction to our union, to be one of the happiest of men! Will you grant it?" he asked, eagerly. Marian could not look at her mother, whose gentle heart was already moved to tears, at the thought of losing her daughter for the second time, and without whom she would be miserable indeed.

"Doctor Ransom, I am happy to know that Marian will be cared for, after I am gone, by one so true, and so strong. But the tears will come at such a time, sir, for I could hardly bear to live apart from her," said the loving mother.

"And of that there will not be the least necessity," returned Sydney. "But pray, sit down, Mrs. Riverson. I believe I can count upon Ned's approval, and I should also like that of Aunt Prudence, of which I do not feel assured. Will you intercede for me there, Mrs. Riverson?"

"Prudence will not be intractable, Doctor Ransom. She could not refuse her assent very long, when Marian asked it. I am sure that I can congratulate you both," said Mrs. Riverson. Then the dear mother with rare tact left the lovers to themselves again, for the reason, perhaps, that they might take their first leave of such other as accepted lovers, without the embarrassing presence of any third party, no matter how dear to both that person might be.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

THE NEW ENGAGEMENT, AND THE MORTGAGE.

T was not without some fear, though with a firm determination to assert and maintain her rights, that Marian permitted her mother

to inform her Aunt Prudence of her engagement. It was fortunate that Ned happened to come home that day. When Mrs. Riverson had finished the recital, and Prudence had recovered a little from the shock it caused her, she said:

"I don't want to hurt your feelings, Mary, but I must say that since the death of my father and brother, and all my efforts to uphold the honor of this family, this engagement is the most humiliating thing to me that has happened! Of all our troubles this is the worst! To marry the son of old Tom Ransom is coming down in the world indeed! How can we ever hold up our heads again? I tell you that blood will tell every time, Mary Riverson, and you ought to know it."

At this point an interruption occurred that requires explanation.

Aunt Betsey Claybank, alarmed about the condi-

tion of Mrs. Riverson's health, together with the late exciting events through which Marian had passed, decided in the goodness of her heart to close her establishment, and come to her relatives for several months. She had arrived that morning, and was in the next room with Ned and Marian, and heard distinctly the conversation between Prudence and Mrs. Riverson. The sentiments expressed by Prudence were such as might be expected to arouse her pugnacity, and her impulses were usually acted upon. As she entered the room, she said:

"Yes, blood will tell, Prudence Riverson, but you ought to know as well, that blood can be improved. And I wan't to tell you that Sydney Ransom is as much better than Albert Howard, as an angel is better than a devil; and you will probably live to see and acknowledge it. Now, don't make that poor girl cry by such talk as this, about her disgracing the family! I am ashamed of you, Prudence, to think you can never get over that nonsense about family pride and dignity. Handsome is that handsome does, is one of my mottoes. I admire Marian's taste at last, for I always did think that young Howard was an empty squirt."

"Hurrah for your sound common sense, Aunt Betsey! You are too much for Aunt Prude in a question of this kind," said Ned, entering the room at this moment.

Marian, who had also heard her Aunt's hard and unsympathetic words, was weeping in the other room,

and the three others finished the contest with Prudence. At last the three proved more than a match for the one, and Prudence yielded, withdrawing her open opposition, and in a half-hearted way made her peace with her niece Marian.

Soon after this episode, Mr. Grace called to inform Mrs. Riverson and Aunt Prudence, that the note was now due, that it was owned by Judge Howard, who by reason of his late reverses needed money badly, and they would have to pay it, or he would be under the painful necessity of foreclosing the mortgage.

Mr. Grace was really grieved, and deplored very much his own inability just then to advance the money to Judge Howard and give them further time; but in conclusion, he assured the ladies that he sympathized with them, and hoped they would place their trust in Him, who doeth all things well."

But Prudence, with something of her old-time energy, said:

"We certainly will know the next person we trust, and will give you an answer in a few days, Mr. Grace."

Soon after this Deacon McCallum paid the Riverson's a visit. The deacon was not a very close observer, but he thought something had gone wrong with them, and he was not the man to withhold neighborly advice or assistance in such an emergency.

"I hope I find you a little better to-day, Mrs. Riverson," said he, addressing that lady; for her failing health was now a source of friendly anxiety.

"This weather is so fine," resumed the Deacon, "that it would be a pity for any one to feel out of sorts either in mind or body. The Lord is very gracious to us, Mrs. Riverson."

"Oh, I am quite well for me, thank you, Deacon. Yes, I think God is good to us all. When we have our children and friends; enough to eat; and the shelter of these massive stone walls; how could one be unhappy?"

"Well, Mary Riverson!" exclaimed Prudence, with surprise. "I only hope the Lord will keep me from taking things so easily as you do; I don't want to. When things come crowding too fast upon me, the pugnacious spirit of my ancestors seems to be concentrated in me, and I glory in it; for some of them had too little," stamping her foot slightly, as she spoke.

Then she related to Deacon McCallum the particulars of Mr. Grace's errand; what it portended, and that they had been talking over the matter when he came in. The deacon was really concerned about this unhappy condition of his neighbor's affairs.

"You exhibit a truly Christian spirit in the midst of your earthly troubles that even Mr. Butler could not fail to commend highly, Mrs. Riverson," said the Deacon, "and we must not forget that the Lord loveth whom he chasteneth."

"All I have to say in answer to that," said Prudence, "is, that I believe I would rather be hated than loved, according to that doctrine."

"Prudence, dear, you are really too ready to com-

plain about little matters. We will get along very well indeed," said Mrs. Riverson, sweetly.

Before leaving, the Deacon called their attention to the financial disasters that were fast hovering about Judge Howard, whose mill was almost entirely destroyed at the time of Marian's rescue; the barn having been swept against it just after dark, as Doctor Monroe had predicted; crushing more than half the structure into an inextricable mass of broken and twisted machinery. This seemed to be the commencement of his troubles, though not the sole cause of them. The son was fast becoming a hindrance to the father, who had always humored him in his hard unsympathetic way, and the money furnished him so liberally had, together with his disappointment about Marian, ruined him.

"Only see, then," said Mrs. Riverson, "how much better we are situated than the Judge and his family. I am sorry for them. They were kind to me once, and that is something worthy of remembrance."

The Deacon's advice was to allow the mortgage to be foreclosed, inasmuch as it would take more than a year to sell it beyond redemption, and this would give them plenty of time to consider their plans. He offered to help them, when the time came, with material assistance, although he possessed but little superfluous wealth. A few days latter, Ned having been called home for the purpose, and Doctor Ransom being present by Marian's invitation, who wished to be represented by her lover, a family council was held

to decide upon the best plan to save the dear old mill from the slow but certain grasp of the mortgag. Doctor Ransom, proud of the relation in which he stood to the fair girl by his side, and of that to her family, was happy and contented, and quite ready to grapple with a financial question of any magnitude, confident of success. The amount was specifically stated, and the period of time during which the right of redemption existed, had been ascertained by Doctor Ransom. Before the discussion of the business before the house commenced, Prudence Riverson, in fulfillment of her promise to Marian, greeted Sydney Ransom cordially, and informed him that she withdrew all her objections to his marriage with Marian. Perhaps it lacked the hearty warmth of the congratulations given him by Aunt Betsey upon their first meeting; but it was so much better than he had expected, and his heart was so full of love for all humanity on account of the love he cherished for this young girl, that he nevertheless thanked her heartily.

"Would you believe it, Sydney?" said Ned, in his jolliest vein, "that this very day Sis produced another lot of gold, with the same old explanation? By George! talk about a girl being worth her weight in gold; here's one of them, sure enough!" said he, pinching Marian on the neck, playfully.

"I am quite sure that I think she is worth her weight in gold, aside from the faculty you have just mentioned, Ned," answered Doctor Ransom, looking

fondly at Marian, who blushed brilliantly under his passionate glance.

"I would willingly part with this faculty to know its secret," said Marian, earnestly.

"Yes, just like a woman; your curiosity would lead you to kill the goose that lays the golden egg, without one compunction of conscience," said Ned.

"Well, it is the strangest, unnaturalest, curiosest, and unearthliest piece of business I ever heard tell of," said Aunt Betsey, with both hands elevated, as if to ward off any such uncanny influence from herself.

Marian then begged Sydney to explain to her the mystery that surrounded and was so constantly perplexing her.

"The moment I think I am happy and contented, one of these occurrences takes place and my peace of mind is again disturbed. There is something so queer about it, that I do wish you would find it out, Sydney! There is nothing I would not do for you, if you would only unravel this mystery for me." Marian said this so earnestly and so pleadingly, that it made a strong impression upon her lover. Prudence could not conceal her mortification at the thought that they owed a debt, they were unable to pay. She could not reconcile herself to it, nor was she able to suggest any better plan than that proposed by Doctor Ransom, and finally adopted by the family. It was briefly this: to let the mortgage be foreclosed, and during the year or more that followed, Doctor Ransom was confident he could easily raise one thousand dollars of

the amount, and if Ned could raise the balance, the matter would soon be ended. If not, it would be easy to borrow the remainder, and in a year or two later they could pay that. Time was all this strong confident man wanted, and this plan would give them all of that they needed. Marian thanked him with more than words, while Ned declared he was a brick; and that he would be on hand with his share of the money when the time arrived! and should he happen to see Mr. Grace or Judge Howard, he would invite them to put on the screws and twist them as hard as they pleased.

That night, in the solitude of his office, Dr. Ransom sat until a late hour, trying to fathom the mystery that had so long surrounded his betrothed. Before he went to bed he had evolved a plan, which seemed to promise good results, although he decided to first call upon one of his old professors, Ronaldson by name, who lived in the city, and ask his advice before attempting to carry it out. The very next day, therefore, he went to the city, and was soon seated in Professor Ronaldson's private office. Dr. Ransom had been recognized by this man as a promising young member of the profession, when he was attending medical lectures, and he admired Sydney Ransom for the fight he was waging against adversity. Professor Ronaldson received him very cordially, and although he was busy, gave him an hour or more of his time with pleasure.

Doctor Ransom soon told him his story, and of his

lively interest in this fair, but eccentric daughter of the family.

The Professor was much interested in the story, and after he had thought it all over, turned to Doctor Ransom and said:

"I am very glad you came to me with this, Doctor Ransom. I am very willing to help you in any way I can, and glad also to learn of any peculiar actions, that seem to demonstrate any strange or unusual powers in the possession of any human being. My favorite study is mankind. If you will follow my directions, I think you will unravel this matter, and bring peace to the young lady who has been worried and irritated, by the unjust suspicions of the gossips about her. I think you understand these subjects well enough to know, that there is no danger that you will learn anything detrimental to the lady."

"I am ready to carry out your suggestions, Professor," answered Doctor Ransom, "I came prepared to do that."

"Thank you, Doctor," returned the Professor.

"Please listen then to my plan. Go home, and make every preparation for a journey which may detain you a week or more from your practice; informing but one person of your real intentions. Say merely, that business of importance has suddenly called you away. Take leave of the young lady just as if you were really about to leave her, and do not hint otherwise to her. But instead of riding to the city on the evening train, you must alight at the sta-

tion nearest to the home of the lady-I know the place well-and you should watch her house closely all night, returning to some house where you can have a bed during the day, and with whose inmates you have previously arranged the matter, and who will keep your secret religiously. Maintain such a watch as I have indicated every night for a week or longer, if nothing should come of it before that; and be sure that no one leaves the house without your knowledge. "In that event I would suggest that you follow closely and cautiously, observing every movement. should have a dark lantern at hand to aid you. I suspect, this phenomenon occurs outside the residence, you will at length unravel it, if your patience is equal to the occasion. If you do not succeed in this way, some other plan must be devised. thing of this nature will yield up its secret to patient investigation. I shall be anxious to hear from you as early as possible," concluded the Professor, as he shook Doctor Ransom's hand and bid him good-bye.

Doctor Ransom assured his friend that he would do his work conscientiously, and report to him its success or failure, at the earliest possible moment.

# CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE SOMNAMBULIST.



HEN Doctor Ransom had once decided to do a certain thing, he was very energetic in its execution. He found that his patients

could do very well for a week or two without him at this time. In fact, while no skeptic as to the value of medicine, he recognized the great importance of the patient's inherent powers, although more valuable in some cases than others. He found one of his professional brethren who was willing to attend to his practice, and then he began to think of the proper abiding place during the day, where he could sleep without fear of discovery. During the night his time must be spent in the woods, skulking about the mill, or the outbuildings belonging to the Riverson homestead. The idea of it made him laugh. Then, as he thought of the possibility of being caught prowling about at night, like a common burglar, his cheeks tingled with shame. But as his object was a laudable one, and he had undertaken to penetrate the mystery, he could not think of retreating. He thought at first of remaining at his father's house by day, and of confiding his secret to his mother, but, upon further reflection,

he decided not to do so. The knowledge of his presence in the house each day could not be kept from his father, and the son did not feel like trusting him. Remembering how successfully Mrs. Jackson had kept Marian's secret, and how well she had aided her to carry out her plans, he believed she would assist him with equal fidelity in anything that was designed to advance the interests of the Riverson family. Mrs. Jackson had already heard of his engagement to Marian, and as she had, during her service as a nurse, followed the professional fortunes of Doctor Kennedy, she had easily laid aside her prejudice against the son of shiftless. Tom Ransom; for had not Doctor Kennedy said he was as smart as the best of them?

Doctor Ransom accordingly drove to Mrs. Jackson's that afternoon, and was received very cordially by that lady, who congratulated him upon his success, but the very next moment expressed grave doubts whether any man deserved Marian Riverson's love; and with such an opinion Doctor Ransom, with his humility and happiness, could only coincide. He listened patiently to her story about "those blessed babies," three hundred in number, to which little army his own dear Marian belonged. He even examined the very almanacs, with all the dates recorded, and Marian's not least among them, having more than the usual number of Mrs. Jackson's peculiar hieroglyphics on the adjacent margin, and listened, without impatience, to her energetic protestations of love for

every member of that family. So much attention easily captivated Mrs. Jackson.

She paused for breath, after she had assured him she was now too old to undertake such responsibilities again, and that nothing but very unusual and exceptional circumstances could induce her to do so; and then, with a wink of her left eye at the doctor, she said:

"I knows of one or two folk as might get me into such work again; but I mention no names, sir, no names, leastways not now."

There could be no doubt of her interest, after the doctor had stated his case, and everything was soon arranged. He was to have the little bedroom, and should be safely guarded by day while he slept, and it would be no trouble to give him his breakfast and supper. Her husband could be as mum as a corpse, and he would be, in this case. Then promising that he would alight at the station near their house the next evening, Doctor Ransom drove down the pike, and proceeded to call upon Marian, in order to acquaint her with his sudden departure.

She was at home, and received him with heightened color and other evidences of pleasure, which a lady can scarcely conceal from the man she loves. After he had explained to her his necessary absence for a week or so, she expressed an ill-defined fear that something would befall him while he was gone; she had lately felt unusually nervous and anxious, and her apprehension seemed to be connected with something

she was often upon the point of defining, but could not. But her lover quieted her fears, looked after her mother's health, and after exchanging a tender farewell with Marian, he drove back to Manayunk. Having completed all his arrangements, he took the train for the city the next evening, but managed to slip out of the car without being observed by anyone who knew him, at the Wissahickon station, not far from the Jackson residence. The worthy woman was expecting him, and took his portmanteau and placed it in his room. After a short conversation with the honest couple, Doctor Ransom bid them good night and wended his way through the timber back of Judge Howard's home. His route was the same that Marian had traveled so often when on her way to Mrs. Jackson's house and the mill; where her footsteps had been so often dogged by the father of him who was now about to spend a week or more-all unknown to herin her service. He soon reached the south bank of the stream and could see the light in their window. shining dimly through the rapidly thickening foliage surrounding the house and mill. It was in the early part of May, and he had no fear that he would get too cold during his night's vigil. In a country where the first day of May is always celebrated by troops of gay young ladies dressed in white without inconvenience, there could be little fear of that!

As he approached the old bridge he listened sometime, in order to be sure that he would meet no one; then he entered it and hurried across. He soon found

himself opposite the house, where he found a seat upon the stump of a tree, that effectually concealed him from any curious passer-by. He now had ample time for reflection, and his thoughts were soon busy with the varied experiences of his life. But he must keep his eyes on the doors of the house, and when the moon goes down, he must depend more upon his ears than his eyes. It was only a few steps across the road to the house, where he could hear Aunt Betsey's voice when she told Prudence, it was high time that honest people were in bed. He could not help wondering what that energetic lady would say, if she knew that he was that moment skulking around their house? An hour later when all was still and no light but that of the moon was visible, the watch became monotonous. He found it necessary to move about; that would at least stir his blood and help pass the time away, and there was no longer any danger that he would arouse the family. As the night wore on-it seemed to the watcher three hours since the lights in the house had disappeared—he heard footsteps coming down the hill on the other side of the creek toward the bridge. It was Deacon McCallum, on his way home from one of his visits to his friend and pastor. Stepping behind a tree on the very edge of the path by the road-side, he soon recognized the deacons form in the rapidly increasing darkness. If anything more had been necessary to remove a doubt, a blast blown with his bandana, must have removed it. As the good man passed the tree behind which Sydney stood, the sud

den, loud and prolonged hoot of a neighboring owl rang out upon the midnight silence and startled both men, unknown to each other. The deacon jumped, but the next moment, ashamed of himself, he muttered, "Yea Lord, the wicked flee indeed, when no man pursueth," and soon after, his form was lost in the blackness of the night.

Then the whipporwill entertained Dr. Ransom with his peculiar and fascinating call, while the watcher walked carefully about the house, finding no sign of the life, he knew so well was throbbing away within its walls. Soon after, the lark announced the approach of another day, and as nothing had been discovered and the increasing light in the East proclaimed the rapid advent of daylight, Sydney hastened to cross the bridge and was soon ready to do justice to the substantial cheer, that Mrs. Jackson placed before him when he reached her house.

She kept watch while he eat, and Reube did the same upon the entrance from the toll-gate. Dr. Ransom slept soundly all day. Only one incident occurred, that came near exposing him, and that happened upon the third day of his sojourn at Mrs. Jacksons. That afternoon, Marian came over to see Mrs. Jackson and sat quite contentedly, listening to the talkative old lady, as she ran on in her rambling way; though she was secretly trembling, for fear Doctor Ransom might give a cough, or make some slight noise that would betray his presence.

So intent was Mrs. Jackson upon this, that she had

not observed that the doctors pocket medicine case lay upon the window sill, not far from which Marian was seated, and which must have been forgotten by him when he went to bed that morning. "Why, Mrs. Jackson?" exclaimed Marian, her eyes dilating with astonishment, "how came Doctor Ransom's medicine case on the window sill?"

Mrs. Jackson acknowledged afterward that she was "struck all of a heap," but being a woman of some resource, she very promptly replied:

"Bless me, my dear, if that man wasn't so flustrated when he was here to see Mr. Jackson the day he went away, that he's gone and left that case right here in this house! Well, well! when he comes back I'll send it to him. Or, will, you take it, my dear, and give it to him when he returns? I know there ain't many as'll see him afore you do. Now, don't mind what Aunt Jackson says to you, dear, seeing that Marian was blushing, and deprecated the idea of taking the medicine case. I do wonder what could have taken the man away in that kind of a hurry?" said Mrs. Jackson.

"I am sure I have no idea," answered Marian, thoroughly satisfied with Mrs. Jackson's story, and not caring to aid the old lady's curiosity in regard to her lover's affairs.

Thus the patient watching of Doctor Ransom continued, one night after another, with little more than the varied hoots of the owl or the earlier singing of the sky-lark some mornings than others, until he

entered upon his fifth watch. He was beginning to waver in his purpose to continue this ten successive nights, if necessary; and having grown as little careless by his anxious watching with no result, he was drowsily sitting upon an upturned block of wood, just opposite the house, and was beginning to nod his head every few minutes, when suddenly a creaking doorhinge aroused him, with every sense keenly alert.

Jumping to his feet, he walked rapidly across the road, and was just in time to see a female figure come out of the house and close the side door carefully behind her. He drew near enough to see that it was Marian, and that she was clad in the loose morning wrapper she usually wore in the forenoon, when at home. At first he thought she was without shoes, but in this he soon perceived that he was mistaken, for she had on her slippers. She moved at once to the gate, passed through it and started down the road toward the bridge, carrying a large key in her hand. Sydney was lost in astonishment, but he determined to allow nothing to escape him, so he followed her closely, and was very soon convinced that she was indeed asleep, and was not likely to be disturbed by his attentions, if he only exercised reasonable care.

On they went, she was leading now, and he, willingly as ever, was ready to follow wherever she might conduct him. The lantern was hastily examined as he walked along, and found to be in good condition; nor did the flash he threw occasionally to one side of the fair pedestrian, excite the least attention from her.

The great mystery was about to be cleared up at last! His suspicions and those of Professor Ronaldson had been well founded.

Instead of continuing to the bridge, Marian turned across the road and approached the mill, while Sydney was not more than four feet behind her. Reaching the door of the mill, the key was inserted in the lock, the bolt flung aside and the door pushed open, when she entered, the doctor springing nimbly in past her, before she could close it again.

Doctor Ransom had not worked in the old mill seven years without knowing every bin, box and bit of machinery on each of the three floors of the establishment, and this knowledge now served him well. He only occasionally allowed his lantern to flash out a dim light, but followed Marian, who started at once for the cellar. He would have known that with his eyes bandaged, and his face became pale with fright, as he thought of some of the dangers to be encountered there. As they passed down the steps, Marian in advance, her head not quite erect, but more as if she was peering cautiously at every step, Sydney wondered whether she would remain upon the north side of the cellar floor? Of course, she would never think of attempting to cross the sluice that ran through the southwest corner of the mill; the walls being arched over the stream where it ran through to join the waters of the creek below.

But he had forgotten; she was not thinking now; she was a living machine, from which the brain cen-

tres of reason and the judgment, had been temporarily disconnected. Gracious Heavens! she turns toward that fatal corner of the cellar! She will fall into the water! There is but a narrow plank spanning its angry waters!

Sydney Ransom was for a moment deprived of his sound judgment by his fear for the girl he loved, and he thought he could not look on any longer and see her rush to destruction, while he stood by and put forth no hand to save her. Dominated by this feeling, he called "Marian" just as she reached the slender plank; but only once, for then he remembered that the somnambulist should be left to the guidance of his instincts in the face of a great danger, and he controlled himself just as he was about to repeat his call.

At the mention of her name, Marian hesitated for a moment before stepping upon the plank; then, with outstretched hands, she murmured, "Yes, I come, grandpa," and then took the first step upon the dangerous bridge, while Doctor Ransom found it necessary to exercise his utmost control to keep himself from uttering a loud cry for help. He could only stand there as if he were rooted to the spot, while he directed the light partly toward her, thus enabling him to see her every step upon that narrow plank. He stood, however, quite ready to plunge into the black water after her, in the event that a false step should precipitate her into it; for he would rather perish with her now, than live to recount the terrible particulars of her death and his cowardice.

There she was, poised above the water, looking like a daring rope-walker; and yet safely she went step by step, no sign of fear; not the least lack of confidence in herself. Then the doctor crossed over also, though he was glad to light his way during the passage, and even then felt relieved when he reached the other bank. Marian passed rapidly to that corner of the wall, and going directly to what appeared to be a solid stone, about ten by fourteen inches in size, she easily lifted the outer shelf away, when the doctor saw a box-like cavern exposed to view; for he did not hesitate now to use his lantern, having long since learned that she paid no attention to it. It was clear that she did not see. Indeed, it was plain enough previous to this, that she was not guided by the sense of sight, as others are.

Into this vault Marian now thrust her hand, and Sydney opened his eyes wider than ever when he saw gold lying within as she withdrew it, and which she at once placed in her pocket. And this was the explanation they had so long sought in vain! Now he would claim his large reward by solving to his beloved's satisfaction, the mystery that had haunted her so long. But should he awaken her now, and claim the reward of his constancy and devotion? No; but wait, something troubles her! She then removed a large envelope from the vault, passed her hands over it, and held it up before her eyes, as if she was reading the superscription, and then she placed it back again. The stone was next replaced, and then, instead

of starting at once across her perilous bridge, she apparently looked about her, as if she were not quite ready to return.

It was at this moment that Doctor Ransom having recovered his equipoise, thought he would make a suggestion to her, and see if she would not reveal the source of her inspiration; for under these circumstances, somnambulists will often converse upon the subject that is dominating them. And if he should arouse her, it would not matter much now, for her marvellous work had already been completed. Then the Doctor said gently:

"Who hid the money here, Marian?"

"Grandfather," she murmured, without the least manifestation of surprise at hearing another voice.

"Did he make the vault?" he asked.

"No banks! and living in such a wild place as this, where else can money be kept safely? Yes, I will make it myself, and no one shall ever know.... but my son... if he lives," here she hesitated, and then placing her hand to her head, she started toward the plank while the doctor followed, his fears returning once more as she skillfully recrossed the slender bridge. Through the barrels and machinery she picked her way, now walking rapidly, almost leaving Sydney behind her; and so quick was she, that he barely escaped being locked in the mill, as she passed out the door. Then, with the key in her hand, she walked rapidly toward the house, entered the side door and closed it carefully behind her, and soon after

everything was still, but the quickened beating of Doctor Ransom's heart, that would persist in increasing its rub-a-dub, until he heard it plainly enough himself.

The next question that presented itself to him was, whether he ought to awaken the family then, and tell them his story, or come back again in the morning and do so? After walking up and down the road a few minutes, while he thought it over, he decided to return to Jackson's at once, and obtain some sleep himself, while Marian was doing the same. He thought it would be less injurious to her to take this course. So he turned his footsteps toward Jackson's house, with a lighter heart than he had felt upon any of his walks at the termination of his previous lonely vigils.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

#### DOCTOR RANSOM EXPLAINS THE MYSTERY.

O soon as Doctor Ransom heard Mr. Jackson moving about the house in the morning, he arose and dressed himself almost as rapidly as he was accustomed to do, when called to a patient in the dead of night. His work being now finished, he was very anxious to present a full report to those most interested, of the fortune that his story must surely place in their possession. Breakfast was soon ready, and then Mrs. Jackson, with a very natural curiosity, wished to know the reason for the Doctor's change of programme, as indicated by his return in the night, and instead of going to bed this morning and sleeping as usual, was now ready to go forth where all could see him.

"Well, Doctor Ransom, you've knocked the very victals out o' my mouth with your story; are you very sure that you are well, sir? that the exposure to the night air hasn't affected you a bit?" Mrs. Jackson asked, with a look of concern upon her face. But when the Doctor assured her that it was not possible, she arose, and with both hands upon her hips, declared that her meal was ended, although she had merely tasted her coffee.

"I knowed that old Colonel Riverson like a book, I did; and if ever a man was set in his way, he was the man. I always thought his family ought to be rich, and God be praised, now they will be, I am sure."

But Sydney Ransom could not listen to Mrs. Jackson very long that morning; he must away to the investigation of the old mill; nor could he delay long enough to go to his office and get his horse and buggy. So he started at once on foot, and it did not take him long to reach the old covered bridge, as full as he was of good news; and he rapped at the side door of the Riverson home just as the family had finished breakfast. Ned Riverson came to the door and exclaimed:

"Sydney Ransom, what in the deuce brings you here this time of day. We thought you were far away from this place?"

"Oh, I have some wonderful news for you, Ned, that is the reason I am here so early this morning!"

Hearing Doctor Ransom's voice, Marian came into the sitting room, and greeted her lover with every indication of surprise at his presence. In a few minutes the other ladies of the family also entered the room where Ned and Marian were rapidly questioning the Doctor.

"We did not expect you to return so soon, Sydney. You have completely surprised us at this early hour. Where is your horse?" asked Marian.

"I walked over," answered Doctor Ransom. At this, they all looked at him with additional surprise.

"Yes," said he, "I have quite a story to tell you this morning, and when I have finished, you will not feel like continuing your usual occupations for the rest of the day."

"Go on, old fellow, you have a highly intelligent and a highly interested audience," said Ned.

"Well, in the first place, I have not been away at all. Every day I have been asleep in Mrs. Jackson's little bedroom, while at night I was stationed not very far from this house, from bedtime until daylight. You remember asking me to solve the mystery of your vexatious habit, Marian?" asked the Doctor, as he turned to the young girl.

"Of course I do, Sydney, but what has all this to do with that request?" she answered.

"Much indeed, as you will soon see," he continued, "and pray, Marian, may I ask if you enjoyed your rest last night? I was really afraid you would take cold."

Ned looked curiously at his friend, and then said:

"Sydney, are you real sure that you are perfectly well? 'Pon my word I have my doubts about it, from the way you talk."

Marian was about to make a similar remark, when the Doctor resumed:

"You will soon see for yourselves whether I am a trifle out of my head or not, though to tell the truth, I was not quite certain at one time last night, that my eyes were not beholding the baseless fabric of a dream. To make a beginning, let me ask Marian to look in the pocket of her dress, for he perceived that it was

the one she had worn during her midnight walk. With feelings of mingled indignation and astonishment, Marian complied with his request, and drew forth four gold coins.

"Have you changed your profession for that of a wizard, Doctor Ransom?" asked Aunt Betsey.

"Why, you have only increased the mystery, instead of clearing it up, as I asked you to do," said Marian, in reproachful tones.

"I have only turned wizard temporarily, Aunt Betsey. My work in that line will soon be ended, but now I want every one of you to go with me over to the mill, where I will conclude my explanation, and which I have reason to believe will be satisfactory to you all. Please bring a large basket with you, Ned!" added Doctor Ransom.

With many protestations as to the folly of the visit and other excuses, the family did at last accompany him across the road to the mill. Ned carried a half bushel basket, though for what purpose was not very clear to him, he declared laughingly.

Doctor Ransom, however, preserved through it all a dignified demeanor, suitable to the importance of the information he was about to impart to this family. The mill had been an hour or so in motion, and the wheat and rye was passing down into their respective hoppers, while the rattle and jar of the machinery, as it pursued its untiring though intelligent work, met them as they crossed the threshold. The miller was naturally surprised at this early visit by the entire

family, and followed them curiously as they descended into the cellar, Doctor Ransom leading the way. When they reached the plank bridge across the sluice, the doctor told the ladies to remain on that side (a useless warning, no doubt, for not one would have attempted its passage) while Ned and he crossed over.

Still wondering what kind of nonsense Doctor Ransom was now engaged in, the ladies waited impatiently for further developments. Nor had they long to wait. The doctor walked straight to the corner of the wall, and at once removed the stone that he had seen Marian lift out from its place the night before, when all could see the secret receptacle beyond.

An exclamation of astonishment burst from the lips of all, while Prudence became unusually excited.

When Doctor Ransom next put his hand into the iron box, and withdrew it again well filled with glittering gold coins, Ned attempted to execute an Indian war dance, and with a whoop, leaped across the sluice without the aid of the bridge, and seizing Marian about the waist, said:

"Now, you won't have to worry any more, Sis. By George, there's enough for all of us in there!" and the happy and excited fellow could hardly be quieted for several minutes.

Prudence at once demanded of Doctor Ransom, how he was able to restore them to their own in so fortuituous a manner.

"Now, I am sure," said she, "that I was right when I insisted that my father did not die a poor

man! And here is a document of some kind from him, as I live!" as Doctor Ransom handed her the packet of papers he had just removed from the vault. "Yes, now I can understand it. Poor man, he wanted to surprise us. And I have often thought hard of him for leaving us so poor, and have been worried nearly to death by this mortgage and other similar troubles." Then overcome by her feelings she sat down and wept, while Mrs. Riverson and Marian made every effort to comfort her.

She very soon comforted them by saying, that it was joy and repentance that caused her to weep for having so often upbraided her kind father.

In the meantime Ned had obtained a meal sack, thinking it better than the basket, and Doctor Ransom was rapidly clearing the vault of its precious contents. When at last it was all in the sack, which was a strong one, Ned declared it would weigh nearly a hundred pounds.

"But you ought to know that we are dying with curiosity to know how you discovered this, Sydney," said Marian.

"I had almost forgotten that in the pleasure and excitement it has afforded me," he answered. Then he narrated the history of his strange adventure.

"Poor John," said Mrs. Riverson, sweetly. "What a pity he did not live to see this day?"

"I am mighty glad of this discovery for your sake, Mary Riverson," said Aunt Betsey; "and, I will say further, that it's the strangest case, and more interesting to us, than any we are ever likely to hear of again, and you'll have the right kind of a husband, Marian. He is worth having, and, perhaps, you will remember that I always said so? I want to shake hands with you, Doctor Ransom, for this little bit of work:" which little request was modestly complied with on the spot.

The miller had long since returned to the upper floors to look after his grists, but with his head so full of the mysterious things he had seen and heard that he was not likely to sleep soundly, for a week at least. Doctor Ransom then approached Marian again, and said:

"Have you then no reward or praise for my agency in this, Marian? Or do you still think I have made false accusations against you? Did you not ask me to explain this curious freak that has plagued you so long?"

"Yes, Doctor Ransom," exclaimed Prudence Riverson before Marian could answer, "my heart has long been a stranger to sentiment, as you probably know, but I think Marian could hardly lavish too much love upon you, to repay you for these five nights of weary watching."

"Heigh ho! as I live, if Prudence isn't getting young and sentimental again. I wouldn't have believed it, that I wouldn't. But now, like as not some old soldier will turn up, and marry her one of these fine days," said Aunt Betsey laughingly.

"I never thought you had much dignity, Betsey

Claybank," said Prudence with severity, "but I really did give you credit for more sense."

"Come, aunties, no quarreling upon such a happy occasion as this," said Ned. Doctor Ransom was waiting for Marian's reply, while the others were talking, and now they both walked to another part of the cellar, where with heightened color she thanked him for his efforts to carry out her wishes, and said she would try to forget his stories concerning her. And unless he should have misgivings about having a wife who was addicted to such queer pranks, and wished to discontinue the engagement. she would do her best to reward him.

"It will be an easy matter for you to reward me, Marian," said Sydney in a low tone. "To live the rest of my life with you for a companion and counselor, will be a recompense, dearest, far beyond anything I could possibly deserve!"

"I am afraid you place too high a value upon me, Sydney," she answered.

Doctor Ransom glanced toward the rest of the party at that moment, and observing that Ned was trying to get the sack upon his shoulder, while the ladies were intently watching him, he suddenly and killfully clasped Marian in his arms and pressed several kisses upon her rosy lips; much to her confusion, but perhaps to her secret delight.

The rest of the party did not notice this little byplay of the lovers.

But Ned now had the sack upon his shoulders and

was starting up-stairs, followed by the whole party. Doctor Ransom assisted Mrs. Riverson, whose heart was now giving her a little more trouble, in consequence of the excitement, and pleasure of the last half hour.

On the first floor the sack must be weighed, and it pulled down the beam at seventy-five pounds; and the two men working in the mill looked on with wondering eyes, and must needs heft the pile, before Ned could proceed to the house with it.

Upon reaching the dining room, the table was cleared off, and the sack of gold poured out upon it, and then all but Aunt Prudence—who seated herself at once and began to read her father's letter—engaged in the delightful task of counting their treasure.

Ned proposed that it should be placed in piles containing one thousand dollars each. In the midst of this work, into which even Mrs. Riverson had entered with spirit, the outer door opened and the Deacon entered. As he gazed upon the busy family arranging and counting the various coins, his eyes grew more and more prominent; while Ned, too busy to look up, continued monotonously his count of "ten, twenty, thirty, forty, forty-five, fifty, fifty-five, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, ninety-five, one hundred."

"I hope I am not intruding, Mrs. Riverson," said the Deacon. "Has it been raining gold along the Wissahickon to-day, that you have so much of it?"

Mrs. Riverson then told him the whole story, and his astonishment increased as she proceeded, and at the conclusion, he "The Lord is good indeed, Mrs. Riverson! Blessed be His holy name! I am rejoiced for your sakes. Now, I think I can understand the ghost I saw on the bridge the night of the storm, when your mill was so badly damaged, three years ago. I never told any one but Mr. Butler about it, and I think he believed I had only been frightened, and had not really seen anything. You must have been the ghost, Marian?" Of course, the Deacon had to tell them all about it, and Marian could only deny all knowledge of the affair.

Now the counting was ended, and there lay nineteen piles, containing one thousand dollars each, and one containing five hundred and seventy-five dollars. That same afternoon Ned and Doctor Ransom took the gold to the bank in Manayunk and deposited it, feeling that it would have been very unsafe to keep such a sum of money at home.

Aunt Prudence was now very anxious to read to the family the letters which she had found in the packet.

# CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## COLONEL RIVERSON'S LETTER.



HE letter that proved so interesting to Prudence Riverson, was from her father, and read as follows:

"Wissahickon, October, 1840.

"To My Children, John and Prudence Riverson, or their Children:

"As you will, my dear children, learn the secret of this vault when you find this letter, a few words of explanation in regard to it will no doubt interest you. When I returned to this home at the close of our Revolutionary struggle, I found this part of the country—although so close to the city—very wild and lonely. Banks were not so numerous then as they are now, even if one felt like trusting them implicitly, which I confess I cannot do. Living then in this lonely place, and being averse to trusting all my money in the hands of men I did not know, I soon saw the necessity for some safe and secret place where my accumulations would be safe from all the attempts of robbers. Therefore it was, that in the year 1800 I constructed this receptacle myself, taking out the

stones, and cutting the outer plate to fit accurately as a door, working in the middle of the night when your mother was asleep in the house. The iron box I had made by a blacksmith in the city, who never saw me before or since, and I set it in its place and gave it the finishing touches, the very night I brought it home.

"From that time I began to keep my surplus money there, so you see it has long been in use by your father. While I entertained the strongest hopes for the future of my country in the early part of this century, I will confess to you now, that in 1837 I began to lose faith in the stability of our prosperity, if not of our Government itself. It seemed to me that extravagance had taken possession of our people. ner of living and dress, such as our fathers and mothers were well satisfied with before and during the Revolution, could no longer satisfy these reckless youngsters, who, in their mad zeal to outstrip their fathers, even while I write, are talking of sending messages hundreds of miles over wires, by means of electricity; surrounded by such evidences of the degeneracy of my countrymen, can you wonder that I tremble for the future welfare of my children, and their children?

"With such influences all about them, I feared that my children would also become infected with these new and extravagant ideas of life! Troubled by these thoughts, and especially by that which raised within me the fear that you might become poor, after I had left you rich—by reason of your inexperience and inability to preserve what I had accumulated—I began to consider plans to guard you against such a future calamity. Believing that I have succeeded in so arranging it that you will not need to spend the evening of your lives in poverty, I have only to ask your forgiveness for adopting a plan, which may impose upon you a struggle with adversity for a few years, leading you at last, it may be, to believe that you are poor, and that your father was not the rich man his neighbors reported him to be.

"If, when you should read these lines, the remembrance of the trials of poverty should be strong within you, I pray your forgiveness, because it was no unkindness toward you that caused me to provide for you in this manner. I was only fearful that you would not know the value of money, and might fritter it away in a few years, and be left in your old age as respectable paupers; pensioners upon the scanty bounty of some of the other members of the Riverson family, all of whom, thank God, have always been able to take care of themselves. And I hope and pray, that my children may not be the first to impair that honorable record of our family.

"If you have suffered from financial perplexities, remember that in the future you will at least know how to care for and appreciate the money I have left you. But do not believe that your dear old father did not love you and care for you? Having finally determined upon this plan, I did not wish to commit all my wealth to one venture. For this reason it was

that I placed twenty thousand dollars in this vault, and as another contingency, and not wishing so much money to lay idle for years, I deposited this year with the firm of Trexel, Lorgan & Co., in the city, another sum of fifty thousand dollars, which they are to invest and increase as much as they can, for a term of fifteen years. At the end of this period, Mr. Lorgan, to whose personal care I committed this trust, is to open the sealed letter of instructions, and turn over to the family to whom it belongs, and whose name he will learn for the first time upon reading said letter, the money and its accumulated earnings.

"Mr. Lorgan is the youngest member of the firm, and for that reason is most likely to live during the period of this trust. I secretly investigated his habits and character, until I became convinced that he was a banker who could be trusted, if one such remained in our distracted country. My experience with the banks during the year 1837, has made me unusually cautious in regard to them. Mr. Lorgan did not know me, nor would I give him my name. But I did require him, upon oath, to promise that he would not read the sealed instructions until the fifteen years had expired. Or, in one other event, which was as follows: Knowing John's loyalty to my wishes, I informed him, as he will remember, that if at any time during the following fifteen years the family should be unduly pressed for money, by any unforeseen emergency after my death, he should call upon Mr. Lorgan, of the firm of Trexel, Lorgan & Co., in the city, and say to him that he was empowered by his father, now dead, to terminate Trust No. 9, which he had placed in his hands in 1840.

"Mr. Lorgan will then be authorized to read the instructions he received from me, and which otherwise were to remain unread until the year 1855; and then you will find money enough from this source alone, to keep you in affluence the rest of your days. confident that my son, John, will accept unquestioned my right to impose these conditions upon my family, and will not interfere with the execution of the trust for the time specified, unless circumstances should really require him to do so. As none of you know anything of the secret vault previous to this, an account of it with a full description of its location, will be found with the sealed papers I placed in Mr. Lorgan's hands; it being my intention, that the discovery of either treasure must necessarily bring the other to light. Unless this was the case, I should be afraid that my caution might overreach itself, and you remain in ignorance of your wealth, only to be discovered and enjoyed at last by your descendants, or perhaps by strangers, after your other small patrimony had been taken from you.

"I am convinced that in this way you will learn the value of money, and knowing the ability of the mill to maintain you in a simple, but comfortable manner for this period of time, I have not hesitated to give you this instruction, even after my death. At present, I believe in the wisdom of the provision I am making for

your future comfort; but if time should prove by any means that I was mistaken, then look as kindly as you can upon your ancestor, who desired that you should follow in the honorable path he endeavored to tread during his stay upon earth, and who wished to continue his care of his loved ones, even after his death.

"You will also find my last will and testament enclosed in this package, which is simple and just. It was drawn up by a lawyer in the city who is now no more, but his own and the signatures of the witnesses thereto, can all be verified. And now, my children, in conclusion, let me beg of you to so conduct yourselves through life, that when you come to die, you may be sincerely mourned by your friends and neighbors. For John, I wish a long life and an honorable career; and after him, through his little son Ned, I trust the Riverson's honorable name may continue to be referred to with pride for generations yet to come.

"To my granddaughter, Marian, whom I love dearly, I would say: if you will some day make an honorable man as good a wife, as your dear mother has been to your father, you will deserve the commendations of every Riverson, and will thus prove yourself to be that noblest of Gods creatures, a perfect woman.

"Your affectionate father and grandfather,

" JACOB RIVERSON."

Upon the conclusion of the letter, Prudence could scarcely articulate her words distinctly. Mrs. Riverson, whose tears had long been coursing over her cheeks, sobbed audibly when the closing sentences,

which gave her such strong praise, were read. At the end Marian threw her arms about her mother's neck and kissing her fondly, declared that she would be satisfied if her husband would ever award her such praise as that! Aunt Betsey aroused them very soon from the depths of their feelings.

"Well, I always knew the Colonel thought lots of his family. But I can't say that I think he always showed it in the very best way. But you'r all right now, and it is quite plain that the good old man loved you dearly, so what more could we ask? and now some of you must go to the city to see Mr. Lorgan," she concluded.

Doctor Ransom and Ned both agreed with Aunt Betsey, that this was the next step to take, in the series of events now demanding their attention; and as Prudence saw no ground of objection, it was soon agreed that they should pay Mr. Lorgan a visit the next morning, and, after some further discussion it was also decided, that Aunt Betsey must accompany them, as well as Doctor Ransom.

But Doctor Ransom begged to be excused, saying that his work was ended when the discovery was made, and then called their attention to the fact that Mrs. Riverson should not be left alone, after the excitement throughout the neighborhood, occasioned by these strange discoveries.

Marian gravely insisted that she must remain with her mother, while Ned, as the grandson and only male member of the family, must represent them all, aided by the efficient support Aunt Prudence and Aunt Betsey could give him.

Such an unusual event as that which had just transpired could not remain unknown to the general public. The deposit of such a large sum of money in the bank at Manayunk, which was not denied by the officers of that institution, only added to the interest manifested on every hand. Upon the day of the removal of the money from the vault, many of the nearest neighbors came to the mill to look at the secret box which had so long concealed this great sum of money. Their friends came to congratulate them upon their sudden good fortune; and many came also who could scarcely be classed among their friends.

Even Mr. Grace called that evening, to express his gratification at their improved prospects. After he had taken a look at the vault and had heard the miller describe in his extravagant manner the wonders of Doctor Ransom's watch; and how Marian had walked across the water while the plank was on its edge, walking only on tip-toe; then he returned to the house and expatiated for half an hour to Mrs. Riverson upon the wonderful things that God could do for his people. He also offered his services freely, in case any legal matters needed attention, and hoped they regarded him as a friend; for he was conscious that he had always felt the keenest interest in their welfare.

How could Mrs. Riverson withstand such tender evidences of proffered kindness? No, she could not, and if Ned had not returned just then, it is impossible to say what Mrs. Riverson might not have empowered Mr. Grace to do for her.

Ned did not feel very friendly toward him, and was not backward about letting him know it, much to his mother's distress. But he told Mr. Grace the greatest favor he could now do them, was to present the note held by Judge Howard, and secure payment therefore, and withdraw all legal proceedings. The crestfallen gentleman took his leave soon after, promising to meet Ned at the bank in a couple of days and receive the money. This was carried out at the time appointed, and when the old mill was free once more, Ned was a happy fellow, indeed.

While he was in Manayunk, Ned received the congratulations of his friends with the same hearty good feeling and thankfulness, that had ever characterized his intercourse with his friends and neighbors.

### CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE VISIT TO TREXEL, LORGAN & CO.

ED RIVERSON, accompanied by his Aunt Prudence and his Aunt Betsey, walked down Third street the next morning, until they

came to the banking house of Trexel, Lorgan & Co. They entered the front room, where men were hurrying in and out as if they only had another half hour to live—so Aunt Betsey said—and found half a dozen men behind the high counters, which had iron railings on top of them, that effectually protected the officials of the bank, and their tempting display of gold and notes, from the chance depredations of any evilminded visitor.

Stepping up to the first window in the railing, behind which an elderly and benevolent-looking gentleman was engaged, Ned asked if Mr. Lorgon was in, and whether he could see him.

"He is in his private office, I believe, sir. What name did you say?"

"Mr. Ned Riverson, if you please, sir?" responded Ned.

In a moment or two the messenger boy returned saying that Mr. Lorgan would see him, and at once conducted the party into that gentleman's presence.

"I am delighted to see you, ladies," said Mr. Lorgan, shaking the hand of each in turn. "And you are also well, I hope, Ned," he soon added.

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Lorgan, we are all particularly well just now. Good fortune will do wonders for any human being," said Ned.

"I can truly rejoice with you, my young friend, over any good fortune that may have waited upon you. If I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to command me," returned Mr. Lorgan. "You are looking remarkably well, Miss Claybank. I am very sorry our acquaintance ended with our ride in the stage that day. I trust it will be different in the future? No doubt Mr. Trotter drives the stage down the pike every morning."

"Dear me, yes, Mr. Lorgan. I don't know whether I could endure it in my lonely home at Barren Hill, if I didn't see Mr. Trotter going by every day. But I am sure Ned is anxious to ask you some questions, sir, and I will not take up all your time," said Aunt Betsey, in conclusion.

"I shall be glad to answer them, Ned, if I can," said Mr. Lorgan, turning toward him.

"Thank you, sir. May I ask you then, Mr. Lorgan, whether an old man came to you sometime during the year 1840, who refused to give you his name, and yet insisted that you should take charge of fifty thousand dollars for a period of fifteen years for him?"

Mr. Lorgan's face lighted up at once. Pleasure and the greatest astonishment were surely depicted

there, and without a word from him, his visitors knew that Ned had spoken the truth. "And did he require you upon oath, to promise that you would not read the instructions he left with you until the end of that period, unless his son should appear and make himself known to you by exhibiting a knowledge of this transaction, which would then justify you in opening the sealed package, and perhaps in terminating the trust?"

"All that you have said, my young friend, is true; but I am amazed that any other person should be in possession of these facts," said Mr. Lorgan.

"That old gentleman was my grandfather, Colonel Jacob Riverson, Mr. Lorgan; and we will be able to satisfy you fully upon that point, I think," said Ned.

"I am already convinced of that, my friends. From the day I rode down the pike in company with Miss Claybank, I have had suspicions that my unknown visitor on that occasion was no other than Colonel Riverson. I had been looking for evidence as to who this money belonged to, upon that very trip. And if I could have seen a portrait of your father, Miss Riverson, I should have known him at once. But how did you come into possession of these facts? I am most anxious to hear your story," said Mr. Lorgan.

Then Ned related to the astonished banker all that had transpired during the past week, not omitting an account of the gold that Marian had found from time to time for several years. Occasionally Prudence or Aunt Betsey would add a word or two to Ned's account, and as he came to Doctor Ransom's descrip-

tion of Marian's midnight walk, her visit to the vault and the passage of the narrow plank, Mr. Lorgan arose and walked rapidly around the room, strangely excited for him. He was even uncivil to one of the clerks, who knocked at the door at that moment with the information, that a gentleman wanted to see him.

When Ned's recital was ended, he handed Mr. Lorgan his grandfather's letter, which that gentleman at once began to read, making occasional exclamations of astonishment as he proceeded.

"There can be no doubt about it," he said, as he finished reading the letter, and returned it to Ned. But now I have something to confess," continued Mr. Lorgan, looking at his friends seriously. . "What made me so anxious about the ownership of this Trust No. Nine—as we call it in the bank—for several years past, was the fact that a little before I met Miss Claybank, I discovered that I had lost in some unaccountable manner the package of sealed instructions that the colonel had placed in my hands, for the purpose of explaining everything when the proper time I knew, of course, that the time had not expired, although that fact failed to comfort me under the circumstances. This made me fearful that I would never be able to discover the rightful owners, and yet being bound by my oath, I did not know how to verify my suspicions in regard to your family, and was, in consequence, often much distressed about it. Just think, that owing to your brother's sudden and peculiar death, Miss Riverson, you might never

have known of these two treasures, were it not for the remarkable performance of that dear girl! It is truly wonderful! I never should have believed it possible. How could she know of that vault? Is it possible that her grandfather could have told her of it when she was very young?" asked Mr. Lorgan.

"No, sir; I hardly think that is probable," said Prudence. "I also have a confession to make, Mr. Lorgan; one that I am ashamed of, but which these late developments seem to require of me. I hope that you will pardon the breach of good manners of which I was guilty upon the occasion to which I refer. I happen to know where your lost papers are, Mr. Lorgan!"

"Will these surprises never cease, ladies? It seems impossible that you should be able to give me that information, Miss Riverson. Pray, explain!" asked Mr. Lorgan, with great interest.

"I will do so, Mr. Lorgan, although the recital will cause my cheeks to burn. You remember when you so kindly invited us to your house the night of the concert?"

"Very well, of course, Miss Riverson, and we enjoyed it exceedingly," said Mr. Lorgan.

"In the room to which I was assigned, there happened to be a very elegant and yet a very old piece of furniture, which appeared to contain nothing but some writing materials. With the curiosity of my sex I began to look over this case, and finding the drawers empty, was led to open one after another

until I found one drawer opening into another through the side, and in that you will find the package of papers you have lost; for I saw it there that evening, and knew my father's writing at a glance."

"Bless my soul," said Mr. Lorgan, interrupting her.
"I see it all now. That piece of furniture was formerly in this room, and it was here when your father came to see me that day. How strange to come about in this way! I really think wonders will never cease in this world."

"You will easily understand why I could not mention this discovery to you before, Mr. Lorgan, and although it was to me a very mysterious occurrence, I cannot say that I expected a result of this kind to follow it! That I did not have any base motive in my curiosity, is the only excuse I can offer for my conduct, Mr. Lorgan," said Prudence Riverson, with considerable humiliation evinced by her manner.

"I hope you will not be distressed by that, Miss Riverson. Do not give it a second thought, for I am truly glad your curiosity prompted you to make the discovery. I will send my chief clerk to the house at once, if you will be so kind as to give him definite instructions," said Mr. Lorgan.

This request Prudence at once complied with, and the clerk at once left the bank to obtain the papers

"Now, Mr. Lorgan, if you will be so kind, we would like to have you tell us about my father; when he visited you, and placed this money in your hands," said Prudence.

"Certainly, you have a right to that, and I will cheerfully describe our interview as faithfully as I can. One morning in the month of October, 1840, I was summoned by Mr. Trexel, Sr., the head of the firm, to his private office and was there introduced to a very old gentleman, who wished to transact some peculiar business with the bank, and yet he wished to deal personally with me, the junior partner. Altogether, I took him to be a man who intended to look after his affairs to the last, and who would brook no interfer-Naturally enough, I desired to ence with his plans. know his name, but that he promptly refused to disclose, and this astonished me not a little. Then he informed me that he had selected our bank to transact his business with, because he had arrived at the conclusion. after a patient investigation, that it was conducted upon sound business principles, and that the members of the firm were not infected with the extravagant follies of the day. Although he admitted that his confidence in banking institutions had been nearly destroyed since the crisis of 1837, he relied sufficiently upon his own judgment, to place in our hands a considerable financial trust, if we would accede to his con-He wished to place in our hands the sum of fifty thousand dollars, for us to invest and increase all we possibly could during a period of fifteen years. It was his desire to provide beyond any contingency for the interests of his family, and yet for their welfare, he wished them to consider themselves poor during this period, or as much of that, as might remain after his death.

"'I know how easily young people are ruined by the knowledge that they will be provided for by the wealth of their parents,' he said, 'and I deplore such tendencies. We were not used to them, and did not encourage such extravagant notions in the colonial days. I wish my family to be worthy of its past history,' he said very proudly. 'And for this reason I wish to arrange it sthey will not find themselves rich until a certain number of years have elapsed, and during this period, they will have an opportunity to show the kind of metal that is in them.'

"He expected us to pay ourselves a fair commission for our trouble, and wished to place in my hands a package of papers containing full instructions as to the name of his family, and the disposition to be made of the money, at the end of the designated period. He purposed informing his son before his death, that if any time previous to the year 1855, the family should become straightened for means by reason of any calamity or unusual circumstances, he was to apply to me saying only, that I was to open the papers relating to Trust Number Nine, when I would be authorized In such event, I could also terminate the to do so. trust and pay over the money to the designated heirs. I must confess that the whole proposition seemed a strange one to me, and I was not particularly anxious to enter into the transaction; but the old gentleman flattered our house so skillfully, pointing out the fact that it was an honor to be thus designated for such a trust; that it would make a considerable addition to

our working capital, and would show in the end that we were sound, and thoroughly reliable, that he pursuaded me.

"Pleasure beamed from his countenance as I told him we would do as he wished, and he grasped my hand and thanked me warmly. Then I received the package he had already prepared, took the oath which he insisted upon administering himself, and placed the papers in my desk, although I was under the impression that I had placed them in our vault. This is indeed the identical package I could not find when, two years after, I thought of looking at it more carefully," as a clerk opened the door and handed it to Mr. Lorgan, stating that it was easily found from the directions given by Miss Riverson.

"And here," continued Mr. Lorgan, "is a letter addressed to you, enclosed with the one to me, which also contains a description of the secret vault, and how to find it, now rendered unnecessary by Miss Marian's remarkable faculty. I must have placed the package in that drawer after marking it as you see there below, 'Relating to Trust Number Nine,' and thinking I had placed it in the vault, as we usually do all such papers, I forgot all about that when I came to look for it.

"No doubt you can easily imagine how I felt about the loss, and how many hunts I have had after the missing papers, which you found so strangely. I often wondered what I should do if the old man's son should suddenly appear, and tell me what his father had instructed him to say. Under such circumstances I knew I should cut a sorry figure without the papers to refer to. It began to haunt me, and it was then I met Miss Claybank in the stage, while I was very much disturbed in mind over the affair. But after she had talked to me awhile about Colonel Riverson and his family, it seemed to flash upon me as an inspiration, that he might have been my unknown visitor.

"After meeting Miss Claybank, every interview with your family seemed to confirm my suspicions, and then I saw why the son had never called upon me to ask for the termination of the trust, when I had every reason to believe that you needed money. Yet, I did not know how to be sure of it, and there was my oath in the way and the period not ended; so what could I do but await the disclosures that time might bring about? My story is nearly ended, ladies, and I have little more to say. I see, however, that the letter to you in my package is about like the one you found in the vault, and which I read half an hour ago. Our business has been prosperous, and Trust No. Nine has participated in the general prosperity."

Here Mr. Lorgan touched a bell and requested the messenger boy who responded, to send Mr. Baker to him. In a moment that gentleman entered the room.

"Mr. Baker," said he, "please to give me the present value of Trust No. Nine?"

In a few minutes Mr. Baker returned and informed him, that the total amount was one hundred and twentyfive thousand dollars. "Good gracious," exclaimed Aunt Betsey, "what will they do with so much money, Mr. Lorgan? And to think that when we were riding down the Ridge together, and were talking about the perplexities of Colonel Riverson's family that had been left without means, that you had so much money belonging to them, and without either of us knowing it? It goes altogether ahead of my experience!"

"Yes, it is wonderful, Miss Claybank! But now I am ready whenever you are, Miss Riverson, to turn over the money and bonds, and advise you in regard to its safety in the future," said Mr. Lorgan.

"We have much to thank you for, Mr. Lorgan, but we have transacted enough business to-day. Very soon we will see you about the formal transfer. Now we must return home and tell Mary and Marian the good news. Good-bye, Mr. Lorgan, and may God bless you; for you are indeed a man whose word is as good as his bond," said Prudence, warmly.

"You do me too much honor, Miss Riverson," said Mr. Lorgan, in response.

At this moment, as they were about to leave, a gentleman was ushered into the room to see Mr. Lorgan. The stranger looked sharply at Prudence Riverson, and the next moment advanced toward her with extended hand.

#### CHAPTER XL.

#### AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.



HE gentleman who entered was apparently about fifty years of age, a little above medium height, well-dressed, having a general air of

neatness about him, and he had a face that would serve as a passport to the hearts of those with whom he might come in contact. As he advanced toward Prudence Riverson, he said:

"Although nearly twenty-five years have passed, I believe I am not mistaken. You are certainly Prudence Riverson—that was?" spoken inquiringly.

"Yes, and I am still Prudence Riverson, Richard Lester, for I knew you the moment you entered that door."

Then the two old friends shook hands cordially, while Ned and Aunt Betsey, with significant looks at each other, accompanied, it must be confessed upon the part of Ned, by some grimaces that were more suggestive than elegant, drew off to one corner of the room, where Mr. Lorgan joined them, all three recognizing the possibility that the conclusion of the romance of Prudence Riverson's life was at hand, if they could judge from her great interest in the gentleman who had just greeted her.

"I have known Mr. Lester for years," said Mr. Lorgan to Ned and Aunt Betsey, "and I admire and love him for his large heart and devotion to what he believes is right. I am astonished to see that he is an old friend of Miss Riverson's. Is it possible that he was once her lover, Miss Claybank?" he asked.

"There is no doubt about it, sir; for I happen to know very well when Prudence Riverson sent him away in her pride. She did love him then, and it looks very much to me, judging from appearances, that she hasn't forgotten it yet," said Aunt Betsey.

It was now very amusing to these friends to watch Mr. Lester and Prudence, who had dropped into two chairs, with their backs toward the other inmates of the room, and were now so engaged in conversation they seemed unaware of the presence of a third person in the room. Mr. Lorgan, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, remarked:

"I think I will remind them of our presence, Miss Claybank, for I may yet be obliged to transact some business here to-day. This room is not usually given up to affairs of the heart."

"I don't wonder a bit that you should say that, Mr. Lorgan. But won't I have some fun with Prudence after we get home? Oh, no! And you know, Ned, there's no sentimental nonsense about your Aunt Prudence!" said Betsey, speaking ironically to that young gentleman, and shaking her finger jestingly at Prudence.

"Mr. Lester, I am very glad to see you, and to

know that you are an old acquaintance of Miss Riverson's," said Mr. Lorgan, advancing to where the couple were seated.

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Lorgan? You will excuse me to day, I hope? I knew Miss Riverson many years ago. I was very agreeably astonished to meet her here, and it revived the olden times so strongly within me, I confess that I quite forgot where I was, and who I came to see," said Mr. Lester, smiling.

"Mr. Lester is an old friend of mine, Miss Riverson," said Mr. Lorgan, "and he has met Doctor Monroe upon several occasions, when they did not have all the time for conversation they desired."

"That is true enough, Mr. Lorgan, for Doctor Monroe is a man after my own heart. He is always ready to heed the cry of the down-trodden and oppressed. Nor does he confine himself to words alone. Actions follow with him, as naturally as rain succeeds the balmy breezes from the south," said Mr. Lester, heartily.

"I have just been telling Mr. Lester all about these strange experiences of ours. He worked for my father years ago, and knew him well. Of course, he was surprised to learn that we had passed through so many troubles, and yet rejoiced that at last everything is turning out so fortunately for us," said Prudence to Mr. Lorgan.

"And I'd be willing to bet a fip-penny bit they were talking about something else," whispered Aunt Betsey to Ned. "Prudence, I really think we should

be going now, unless you have concluded not to return with us to-day," said Aunt Betsey, with that charmingly vigorous expression of hers, which again brought the warm blood to the face of Prudence, and quickened her footsteps toward the door, but she did not leave until Mr. Lester had taken her hand to bid her good-bye, and told her he would certainly visit her at her home the next day. Prudence remonstrated feebly, but it seemed to make no impression upon Mr. Lester, who replied:

"You may expect me about two o'clock to-morrow, Prudence."

When Ned and his companions reached home that afternoon, they found Marian and her mother waiting anxiously to learn the result of their visit to Mr. Lorgan.

When Ned danced around Marian and told her that the money in Mr. Lorgan's possession amounted to one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, she would not believe him until Aunt Betsey had corroborated his story, which that lady did upon the spot.

Mrs. Riverson—gentle soul—declared that they were receiving much more than they deserved; that while so many unfortunate mortals lived about her, she was not sure that she could enjoy the wealth, that the kindness of her poor old father-in-law had provided for them, years after his death.

"God grant that the dear old man may be able to recognize my gratitude at this moment. Who knows?" said she softly.

No thought of the troubles they had just escaped, or the hours of anxiety not to say anguish, that had disturbed their sleep on account of financial stress, had ever caused her to reproach Colonel Riverson for one moment.

And when Ned, continuing his recital of the day's experiences, related the meeting between Aunt Prudence and Mr. Lester, the dear lady expressed the greatest pleasure.

"Oh, Prudence! I am so glad for your sake. I always liked Richard so well. I am afraid you did him a great wrong when you sent him away that evening. How does he look? and did he ever marry?" asked Mrs. Riverson.

Prudence was quite averse to conversing about Mr. Lester, but she did finally answer:

"He is more than twenty years older, Mary, and tells me that he never married."

"Yes," interrupted Aunt Betsey, "and he will be here to morrow afternoon to talk over old times with Prudence, and she really tried to keep him away, Mary! But if I am any judge—and I think I am, she can't prevent him from demanding a full explanation, even at this late day."

"Betsey Claybank! will you let me and my affairs alone a little while?" asked Prudence.

"No I won't, just yet; for a woman who has been guilty of as much nonsense as you have for the last twenty-five years, and who tried her best to have this dear girl follow in her footsteps, ought to be worried

for several weeks yet; I believe in punishment in this world, Prudence, and I'am going to see to it that you get your proper share. When I think you have been punished enough, I'll stop."

But Prudence now thought discretion the better part of valor for her, and so she left the room, while Aunt Betsey resumed:

"Do you see that, Mary? Prudence runs away! She never did such a thing as that in the last twenty-five years, and you know what it means as well as I do. Well, I can't say that I have any serious objections, but I won't give in to her yet awhile."

Doctor Ransom drove over the hills to see Marian that evening, as well as to learn the result of their visit to Mr. Lorgan. He always received a very cordial welcome now, and even Aunt Prudence insisted upon shaking his hand with great warmth, before she told him about their interview with Mr. Lorgan, and detailed to him the account of her father's visit to his bank in 1840. The Doctor thought the sum he had been instrumental in finding, was large enough to make them all comfortable and happy; but when he heard of the additional amount in Mr. Lorgan's hands, he thought it was too much for his peace of mind; it contrasted so uncomfortably with his own scant accumulations.. He expressed some such feeling to Marian shortly after, when with much spirit she replied:

"Indeed, I shall be angry, Sydney, if you ever suggest such an unjust comparison again. You seem to for-

get how much you have had to do with this good fortune, and how willing and able you were to help us in our financial extremity. The man to whom I give my hand, will always be my equal in everything. I think I shall value this wealth more for what it will enable me to do for you, than for any other reason; next at least, to the ability to add to the comfort of my dear mother, now that her health is failing."

"I could hold up my head proudly enough, when I thought the world was against me; and when I could see no prospect of my love for you being returned. But since you have assured me of that and in addition, I find you ready to pour riches into my lap—when your pure, warm heart alone, is far more than I de serve—I feel humbled, nay almost sad, when I think of the thousands who can have no such happiness."

"But my husband must overcome such self-depreciation as that," answered Marian. "You should remember the Riverson pride, my dear," she said with a smile.

"Ah! now you are thinking of Aunt Prudence, Marian. She has so long prided herself upon that! Will she still allow that to stand between her and happiness?" asked her lover.

"No, Sydney, I do not believe she will. And it increases my own happiness to think so. Aunt Prudence has changed very much since her return from the city. Even Aunt Betsey is sure of it, and is almost cruel to her in consequence," said Marian.

The next day Mr. Lester called to see Prudence. Mrs. Riverson was very glad to see him, and expressed her pleasure, as well as her opinion that he looked very natural, only a little older.

"As for this young lady," said Mr. Lester, "I never had the pleasure of her acquaintance before. I hope we shall become good friends," he said, smilingly.

Aunt Prudence was blushing and acting strangely for her. First, she would go into the dining-room to look for Ned, though what she wanted of that graceless young man, was not very clear to her. Then she would run to the window, to see whether it was their cow that happened to be passing the house. But in a short time Mr. Lester found that they were alone together, owing to the tact of the other members of the family.

"Now, Prudence," he began, "you know I promised to tell you what I have been doing all these years. The fact is, that after you sent me from you so cruelly—" and at these words Prudence looked guiltily at her companion. But whatever happened in the little old-fashioned sitting-room of the Riverson homestead, no one ever knew, and only a few last words escaped to the ears of the household, through the door which mischief-making Ned had slyly opened an inch or two. "Providence or fate has brought us together," Mr. Lester was heard to say, softly, "and don't you see that the only proper atonement you can make for your folly is to become my wife, Prudence? I still love

you, and with a more manly love than ever. What you have learned by suffering and experience, you can never forget; do not turn me away again. I am alone in the world, Prudence, and I need you. Will you not consent at last, Prudence?"

How could Prudence Riverson hesitate much longer, after all her bitter trials? No, she felt that she could not put this happiness out of her life again, no matter what Aunt Betsey and the rest of the family might say! So she answered: "I will try to repay you for your great love, Richard. I acknowledge my sin, and that I never ceased to love you!"

"Thank God for that, Prudence; now let no shadow come between us again!" said he, as he clasped her in his arms with a loving embrace.

#### CHAPTER XLI.

#### READJUSTMENTS.

HE series of remarkable disclosures that meant so much to the family of Colonel Riverson, succeeded each other with such rapidity,

that the good people of Roxborough, Manayunk and Germantown, could scarcely talk of anything else for the following fortnight. The most wonderful of all was of course the first in the series, viz.: that of Marian's somnambulistic visit to her grandfather's secret hiding place for his gold, under the watchful supervision of the young physician, who had already won her heart and the promise of her hand. This had in turn revealed the existence of the greater fortune held in trust for them by the great banking house of Trexel, Lorgan & Co., "and," said Doctor Monroe, who loved to talk of these events to every one he met, "as if there were not enough to convince them that the Lord was upon their side; while in the city to see about the money with Trexel, Lorgan & Co., Miss Prudence meets the man she discarded in her pride twenty-five years before, and they have made it up, and will be married in a few months, it is said. I am not a very old man, he continued, "but I never saw the like

before in my life. And to think that Doctor Ransom, who, by the way, is a fine young physician, though somewhat prejudiced against the only God given law of the healing art, wins the heart of Marian Riverson, and gains wealth and happiness thereby; when only a short time before, every one supposed that the only path that could lead her to wealth, must be through a marriage into the Howard family.

"And where is the wealth of the Howard's now? going so fast that it is already questionable whether the old man will be able to keep the fine home he has lived in so long; as he never cared for any one but himself in the days of his prosperity, who will do him honor after his riches have taken wings and have flown away? And Albert, did you say, my, oh my! only last week I stopped his horse and helped him into his buggy, and then drove him home, because he was too drunk to get into it without assistance. The distress of his proud old mother really made my heart bleed, as she thanked me in her dignified manner, for my kindness to her wayward boy.

"This only illustrates the ups and downs of our American life, and the fortunate thing about it is the great number of instances in these upheavals, where the most worthy come to the surface, as in this case."

With these remarks, the good Doctor visited his next patient, to make similar observations to him.

When the good Deacon McCallum had related all these events to his dear pastor and his wife, the very next Tuesday evening, the doings of Providence could be plainly discerned in all these events by that worthy clergyman. But when his good wife asked whether, in case Marian had never found the vault in her sleep and Mr. Lorgan had never recovered the instructions the old Colonel had left with him, he would have been as willing to believe that the hand of the Lord was in it? he would not condescend to answer her. There were some questions that this lady often asked her husband, partly from a spirit of mischief, and partly from a desire for more light, that Mr. Butler believed were beneath the dignity of a minister of the gospel to notice. This was the manner of his reproof to his helpmate, and such it was upon this occasion.

Then the Deacon admitted to his pastor, in confidence, that the ghost he had seen several years before, must have been Miss Marian Riverson, judging from these late developments. . . . .

Ned Riverson now thought of his dear old friend, Professor Carl, who could not come to him just then, because he was laid up with rheumatism. Ned found him in his room with the offending foot upon a chair, while Keno was by his side, looking with intelligent eyes into those of his loved master and friend, as if he would divine his every wish, and try to obey it. Upon a stand by his side was his violin, and within reach a cornet stood upon the floor; while his birds in the large cages, occupying one side of the room, were merrily hopping and skipping from perch to perch, happy, perhaps, because their kind master had not left them for more than a week.

"Ah, Ned, my dear boy, I am so glad to see you. How long it has been since I have seen you! I can't get up now, but take a seat, you dear fellow. Do you know I want to come to one of your rehearsals, as soon as I can get on my feet again."

"Well, you will receive a royal welcome whenever you do, Professor Carl. If it were not for you, I could not enjoy the great pleasure I now experience every time I lead my orchestra," said Ned.

"Ah! I was not the cause my boy. You had it here," tapping his head and his heart significantly; and accompanying it with the gestures, that no one but a German can employ effectively. "It was not in the power of any one to put out the fire. It would burn! But it makes my old heart sad, to see all my pupils go away from me, leaving me again to my birds, my music, and Keno"—looking at the latter with tears in his eyes, to which that intelligent quadruped responded by jumping into his master's lap and barking his undying devotion. "But what are all these stories I have heard about your sister, and the wealth you have found, my boy?" asked his friend.

"That is just what I wanted to tell you about," said Ned, who thereupon, seated by the side of Professor Carl, related all these events as they had happened, and last but not least, came the statement, that nearly one hundred and forty thousand dollars would be divided between them."

"Gott im Himmel!" exclaimed the musician, his surprise throwing him back to his mother tongue once more, before he could check himself. "Gracious me," he resumed, "what will you do with so much money?"

"Oh, there won't be any trouble about that part of it, Professor," said Ned. "We can do ever so many things for music now, that we could never accomplish without money. And when you get old, my dear friend, you shall come and live with me. Then we will have music fit for angels to near, and to our hearts content. So cheer up, you will soon be well again, and there is much to live for."

At this the tears came in earnest from the eyes of the warm hearted musician, as he grasped Ned's hand in parting and said:

"Yes, with this mysterious something within me, that fills me with happiness all over when I hear or play beautiful music, why should I not live? If I could not have it, I would have died long ago. My happiness, my world, is in my music and my scholars, and when they leave me, how I shall suffer! I will come to you as soon as I can walk again."

Ned went home with a lighter heart, thinking over all kinds of plans in relation to music, that his share of the fortune would enable him to carry out, and in each plan that presented itself, Professor Carl Rother occupied a very prominent position.

During Ned's absence from home that day, Mrs. Jackson had driven over in her Dearborn wagon, to see her old friends, and to congratulate them upon their good fortune.

"Bless your heart, Mrs. Riverson," she exclaimed,

"the good news has helped you amazin'. You don't look a day older nor when you was holding that blessed girl there, a baby in your arms. And what stories these are as I've heard the last few days! I'm dreadful proud, ma'am, that I had a little hand in the business, as I often said to Doctor Ransom, when he was stoppin' at our house. I guess you know all about that now, Marian? Just let me tell you, my dear, that Doctor Ransom 's as good as they make 'em, if he is old Tom Ransom's son. Though I've several times said to Jackson, says I, Rube, if he is old Tom's son. I'll have to give in. But I won't believe it, unless I get a chance to examine evidence. I prefer, says I to Jackson, to look at it that way, and says he, that's my ticket too. It makes me feel more reconciled with natur' to believe that he got mixed up with some other. woman's baby, when he was in his mother's arms, ma'am, and so I suppose I shall look at it to the end of my days, but begging your pardon, Marian, my dear, for saying it in your presence."

"Oh, that's only a trifle to take from you, Mrs. Jackson, who have loved us so long and have been so kind to us. I am sure I do not care whose son he is, since I know him as well as I do. The man who is able to rise above his family and leave them behind him, and yet without neglecting them, or becoming ashamed of them, has done something he may well be proud of; and it will help every one a little," said Marian, with pardonable pride.

Then Mrs. Jackson left them, not, however, before

she told Marian and Aunt Betsey for the twentieth time, that Mrs. Riverson must not be allowed to do anything at all.

It was obvious, from his will, that the old Colonel did not intend to have the old home owned by any one but a Riverson, and his wishes have been respected to this day. The necessary legal steps were taken by the family with reference to the will, and the money in the hands of -Trexel, Lorgan & Co. this was not attended to by Mr. Grace, although he had very kindly offered his services to the family during a congratulatory call he made upon them. He was apparently unconscious that he had ever given them the least cause for offense, and as he left the house upon that occasion, he bore with him as he walked up the hill, a lively consciousness of the purity of his motives. It pained him exceedingly to perceive that his advice was not sought in the management of such a sum of money, and it was a long time before his pastor ascertained why Mr. Grace had spoken with such unusual fervor at the next weekly prayer meeting.

The attention that Doctor Ransom's heart prompted him to give to Marian and her family, together with his usual busy life among the suffering, fully occupied his time from morning until night. His advice was needed at every step in the various changes taking place in the affairs of the Riverson family, and neither Mrs. Riverson nor Aunt Prudence, seemed willing to proceed with any business until Sydney had been consulted, and had given his approval. But with all these things crowding upon him and demanding his time, Doctor Ransom did not forget his promise to his friend, Professor Ronaldson, who had taken such an interest in Marian's case, and whose advice had yielded such a rich harvest to her, as well as to the man she loved. As the Doctor's time was so thoroughly taken up during the day, he went to the city the first evening he could get away, after the denouement resulting from his execution of the Professor's plan.

As the newspapers had obtained many particulars of these strange occurrences, Professor Ronaldson first learned of the success of his plan through their columns. But there yet remained so many particulars that Doctor Ransom could alone give him, that he awaited his arrival with no little interest. When upon this evening Doctor Ransom's card was sent up to him, followed in a moment by that gentleman, the professor thus greeted him:

"Ah! Ransom, my dear fellow, our little device worked exceedingly well, did it not? But notwith-standing the account of it already before the public, I am most anxious to hear your story."

Then Doctor Ransom related to his friend all his adventures upon that memorable fifth night of his watch, not omitting the least incident that he could recall, for fear of marring the completeness of the history upon which he desired the professor's opinion. At the conclusion of the doctor's story, interrupted

occasionally by a query of his friend, for fear a point might be overlooked, the professor said:

"This is the most extraordinary case that has ever happened—in any sense, under my personal observation. It is very interesting to me, from a professional point of view, and also in a friendly way, to see you so successfully securing a fortune for your promised wife and her family, when, as things looked, there was great danger that it never would have been found. After you are married, my dear fellow, you can say, with truth, that you have a very remarkable wife."

Professor Ronaldson then sat a few moments as if in profound meditation; then he turned to Sydney and said:

"Do you know, Doctor Ransom, that this case seems to confirm or, at least, would render probable, some new views about inherited traits that I have been entertaining for several years? I will admit that they are a little startling, and for this reason I have not, as yet, dared to give them publicity."

"That is a singular coincidence, indeed," responded Doctor Ransom. "Pray, to what do you refer, Professor?"

Upon this invitation to propound his theory, Professor Ronaldson took a cigar from his case and handing it to Doctor Ransom, with a light, he did the same for himself; then sitting face to face, the one prepared to listen, the other proceeded to formulate, to the best of his ability, the ideas that up to this time had been floating through his brain in a very shadowy manner.

"Dr. Ransom, you know how those traits, or acts, that we term instinctive, both in men and animals, are handed down from fathers and mothers to their children? The animal or the human infant will perform certain acts when the time arrives, without having possessed any previous experience under similar circumstances. Now, how is this possible? It seems to me that it can only be through the office of that faculty we call memory; and by that we mean the registration of some sensible interactions between the various parts of the brain, which in this way becomes a part of every individual that comes after. In no other rational manner can we understand how these acts can be so correctly performed upon the very first occasion, that they are required. When you look at the subject in this way, is it taking such an immense step to believe, that Colonel Riverson, filled, as he was, with the idea of a hiding place for his savings about the time his son John was begotten, had impressed upon the brain of that son such a memory of the locality of this secret vault, that it was transmitted to his daughter by the son? As it was one of those memories acquired before birth, it was the more likely to be covered up-overwhelmed, if you please-by those memories that we acquire during the period of growth and development, and which, ordinarily considered. are our only examples of memory.

"But you might easily ask how we could account

for the discovery of the vault, in the case of Miss Ma-And I answer, that to the somnambulistic state we must look for the solution of this problem! While we do not vet know all about this peculiar condition, there being several allied states or gradations classed with it, there seem to be good reasons for believing, that in this state, consciousness and the higher faculties are suppressed or inhibited, while the lower, the automatic or instinctive faculties, become more active. You could see that she was dominated at this time by a memory, that must have been strong upon her grandfather; for your suggestion was at once referred to him as its source. And this was associated in her brain with the inherited memory of the secret vault. I can explain it in no other way, and I am inclined to regard this as the correct solution.

"Of course, the future may give us a better explanation, but I believe that an attempt to reason upon such data as we have, is more profitable than to fold our hands, and assign the phenomena to the unknowable," said the professor, in conclusion, as he carefully knocked the ashes from his cigar.

"I am intensely interested in the whole question," said Doctor Ransom, in reply. Soon after the termination of this conversation, Doctor Ransom thanked his friend for his assistance and his interest in the case, and then bid him good-night.

At last, after his early boyhood had been surrounded with little else than the bitter contentions of

his father and mother, because of the imprudence and shiftlessness of the former, and with very little to make life pleasant to him, the boy had developed into a man. Incited to greater things by the daughter of the man for whom he began to work as an eager, badly-dressed, frizzly-headed boy, he had now gone far beyond his loftiest ambition, in the days when he swept out the old mill; and he was at last to marry the girl to whom he owed so much, and whom he had hitherto worshiped as a God, from an immeasurable distance. This marriage was also at hand. take place in the old house where Marian had been born, and her father before her. It had been well furnished throughout, under the personal supervision of Mr. Lester, who was to make it his future home. Many were the guests present upon that happy occasion, the house being filled to overflowing. As a consequence, the old mill and the road between it and the house, aided to relieve the incompetency of the house to contain the guests, for nearly all of them must visit the mill and the secret vault in its cellar, and view with their own eyes, the plank bridge that Marian crossed during her celebrated midnight walk. of the ladies essayed to imitate this wonderful feat of the bride, but they usually desisted after one or two steps and several screams.

Ned Riverson with his whole orchestra, was present to honor the occasion, and to promote by the aid of beautiful music, the festivities of such an auspicious event, and Professor Carl Rother received so much attention, that he declared he never spent a happier evening in his life.

After the Reverend Mr. Butler had, in a solemn voice, pronounced the words that made Sydney Ransom and Marian Riverson man and wife, congratulations and good wishes came to them rapidly and with sincere feeling. Before this part of the festivities had been completed, the clergyman again took a position at the end of the parlor, as if he was expecting to perform another ceremony of this character This action of the clergyman was sufficient to excite the curiosity of the assembled guests, nor did they have long to wait, for very soon Richard Lester and Prudence Riverson entered the room arm in arm, and advanced to the position occupied by the minister. Then it was that a hush ran through the crowded rooms, and every one pressed forward to see Prudence Riverson pass through this trying ordeal. When at last they saw that she was no longer the old maid they had supposed she would remain until the day of her death, the congratulations were resumed with the double earnestness that the peculiar occasion demanded.

As Mrs. Riverson was not so well as usual this evening, she had been assigned to an easy chair by her son-in-law, who affectionately ordered her to remain in it during the evening. With her sweetest smiles she told her friends how the Doctor was already beginning to lord it over her, and should it continue, that it would not be long before she would be wheeled around in a chair.

Doctor Ransom furnished, ready for their reception the day after their marriage, the large and comfortable house his wife had purchased for their joint use in Manayunk, and thither they moved, accompanied by Mrs. Riverson, the day following the wedding, when the amiable invalid was given the best room in the house. Here, attended by her loving daughter and her husband, who had loved that gentle lady from the day he first entered the mill of John Riverson, this loving mother passed many happy years.

The last that was heard of Ned Riverson, he was busily engaged with Professor Carl, in an attempt to establish a musical school for the poor.

Mrs. Richard Lester, a year or two after her marriage, would scarcely have been recognized as the Prudence Riverson of the olden times. Where her features had formerly been angular in outline, they were now round and full. In brief, her face had become plump and rosy, and represented by its smiles, the joy and happiness within. This much will the satisfaction of a yearning and suffering heart do for the external form and features of the body.

No one knew better than Mr. Lester how the old mill ought to be managed, and if he could only put on an apron three or four times a year, and then lay himself across one of the stones and pick it patiently until it was fit to grind the wheat into beautiful flour, it would, he declared, act upon him as the fountain of perpetual youth.

When, in the course of time, it became necessary to

think of some motherly old body to perform the kind offices that Mrs. Jackson had so long followed as a profession, there was no hesitation upon the part of the old toll-gate keeper's wife, when she gave voice to her decision in her characteristic fashion:

"Of course, I'll go. I'd a most break my head for any of that family; and, after all, what's a record? Many a man has broken his badly, and I'll do the same. 'Taint no more harm in a woman than a man. But if it could a stopped right at the even three hundred, I would have liked it."

In this way the kind old woman settled the question with herself, and before it came to be agitated again in that household, Mrs. Jackson had been gathered to the home of her ancestors.

The good Deacon McCallum has long ceased to gather up the cotton as it was rolled off in snowy sheets from the cylinders of his mill. His tongue is silent now, unless it has been loosed again in one of those happy mansions above, where he so confidently expected to spend a never ending eternity.

Poor shiftless Tom Ransom, still adhering to his great purpose of removing to the West, where a man could have room to develop, had persistently saved the money he obtained from Albert Howard to be used in this enterprise. Waiting until Mr. Butler got settled in his new home in Illinois—whither he went in 1855 to carry the Glad Tidings to the residents of her boundless prairies—the poor man was taken ill, and died a few days after, only disclosing, upon his dying

bed, to his weary wife, the fact that he possessed this money, that he had horded so miserly to promote the one great object of his life. Alas! only one more instance of a man fainting by the way, and dying in sight of the promised land.

Did Aunt Betsey Claybank continue to wield her tongue as vigorously as ever in the cause of practical good sense, and persist in her opposition to all that was matrimonial? That is what one would naturally expect of her, not being wont to change her opinions with the wind, but the latest information from this energetic maiden lady was the least bit suspicious. was asserted by some, that whenever Mr. Trotter drove his stage past Aunt Betsey's house, a year or two later than the events above narrated, you were certain to see her upon the front porch, waving Mr. Trotter a good-morning with her sunniest smile. The same persons also declared, that upon more than one occasion, when they had witnessed this kindly interchange of courtesies, there had been a heightened color upon Betsey Claybank's plump cheeks. Nor did these grave suspicions rest here. Mr. Trotter was a very companionable man to those who could appreciate his versatile talents. To all others he was dignified and reticent. To some of the former he had been known to observe, in a moment of supreme confidence on his part, that:

"Young women are too foolish now-a-days for anything; and for such I haven't any use. But for good sound horse sense, however, and that's not to be

0.00

sneezed at, let me tell you, just take a woman that has outgrown all the nonsense of youth, and who is still young enough to help a man, rather than be a drag upon him! And let me add that I have my eye on one at this moment, that lives up the road, and I'll wager her against the best of 'em along the Reading Pike. And, what's more to the purpose, I know how the land lays in that direction," concluding his remarks with a sly wink of his right eye, that meant volumes to his two confidential friends.

As for Doctor Sydney Ransom and his charming wife, they are still living in Manayunk, dear reader, surrounded by their three children, now rapidly approaching manhood and womanhood. The friendship commenced in the heyday of Doctor Ransom's youthful love, for the warm-hearted representative of the new school of medicine, who began to practice several years before him, has never been dimmed by any professional rivalry or jealousy, during all these years. More than once when circumstances seemed to conspire agains' Doctor Monroe in his professional career, did Doctor Ransom's powerful voice call a halt in the persecution, and demand and secure for this man, as his friend, the same fair-play and judgment that would have been accorded him.

Honored and beloved as Doctor Ransom and his dear wife are, they both insist with their native modesty, that the blessings they have received far outweigh, in their opinion, anything they may ever have deserved. Although you may never be able to find them,

gentle reader, because you do not possess the key totheir identity, there they still live, happy in the consciousness of duty performed, and never thinking of the eccentric old grandfather, but with love and veneration. And strange to say, since that eventful night, Marian Riverson that was, has never been known to walk in her sleep.

THE END.

